

**HISTORY AND MEMOIR**  
*of the* 33rd BATTALION MACHINE  
GUN CORPS *and of the* 19th, 98th,  
100th *and* 248th MACHINE GUN  
COMPANIES.

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1914 1919

MEETEREN

LE CATEAU  
 THE MARNE  
 THE AISNE  
 LE MESNIL  
 PLOEGSTIERT  
 BOIS GRENIER  
 LA BASSEE  
 LOOS  
 QUINCHY  
 THE SOMME  
 HIGH WOOD  
 DELVILLE WOOD  
 LES BOEUFs  
 RANCOURT  
 BOUCHAVESNES  
 CLERY  
 ARRAS  
 CROISILLES

HINDENBURG LINE  
 FONTAINE  
 NIEUPORT  
 MESSINES  
 YPRES  
 MEMIN ROAD  
 PASSCHENDAELE  
 NEUVE EGLISE  
 DICKEBUSCH  
 YPRES  
 CAMBRAI  
 VILLERS GUISLAIN  
 ST. QUENTIN CANAL  
 CLARY  
 THE SELLE  
 ENGLEFONTAINE  
 FORET DE MORMAL  
 MAUBEUGE

HISTORY and MEMOIR  
 of  
 the 33rd Battalion, Machine Gun Corps  
 and of the  
 19th, 98th, 100th and 248th M.G. Coys.  
 Written and Illustrated  
 by  
 Members of the Battalion.











[Printed by Waterlow Bros. & Layton Limited.]

"ESPRIT DE CORPS." THE 33RD BATTN,  
MACHINE GUN CORPS IN ACTION AT METELEN,  
13TH APRIL, 1918. (From a Painting by  
Lieut-Col. G. S. Hutchison, D.S.O., M.C.)

Geoffrey S. Hutchison  
1918

HISTORY AND MEMOIR OF THE  
33rd BATTALION MACHINE GUN CORPS  
AND OF THE  
19th, 98th, 100th AND 248th M.G. COMPANIES.

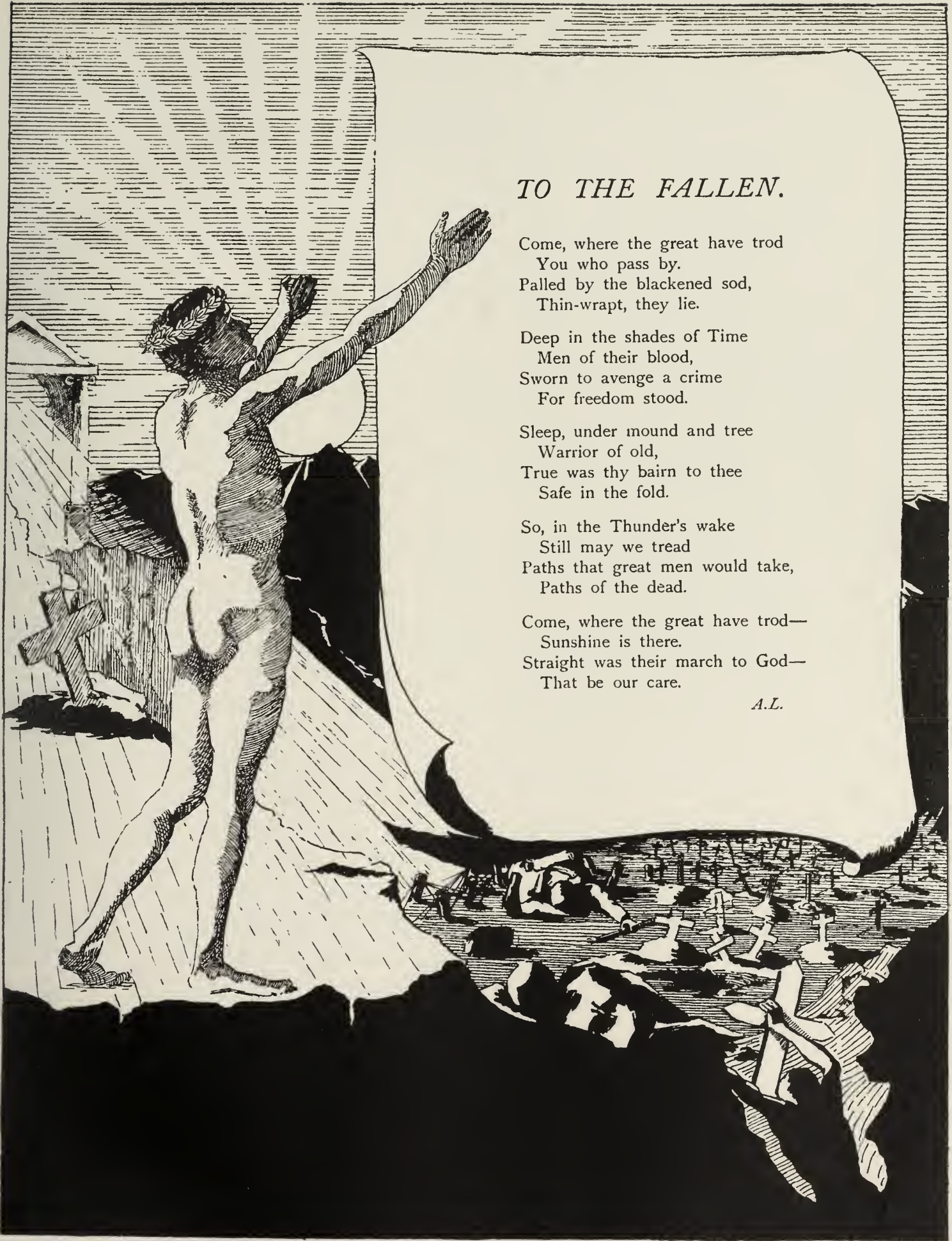
*Written and Illustrated by*  
MEMBERS OF THE BATTALION.

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## TO THE FALLEN.

Come, where the great have trod  
You who pass by.  
Palled by the blackened sod,  
Thin-wrapt, they lie.

Deep in the shades of Time  
Men of their blood,  
Sworn to avenge a crime  
For freedom stood.

Sleep, under mound and tree  
Warrior of old,  
True was thy bairn to thee  
Safe in the fold.

So, in the Thunder's wake  
Still may we tread  
Paths that great men would take,  
Paths of the dead.

Come, where the great have trod—  
Sunshine is there.  
Straight was their march to God—  
That be our care.

*A.L.*



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## INTRODUCTION.

**S**O much has been written on the Great War, both by accredited experts and by the armchair historian, that, at first glance, it would seem that the world's greatest catastrophe is a hobby that has been ridden to death by journalists, pamphleteers and novelists. Yet, we do claim for this narrative that it has the veracity to be expected of an account, compiled in the field, of operations in which we have actually participated; and the reader, therefore, has considerably more than cent. for cent. in the matter of living and visualizing the episodes described. The task of thus setting forth this History has not been lightly approached, involving, as it does, our sentimental regard for the fallen, and our respect for the intelligence of the living. Therefore, while anticipating the enthusiasm of all those identified with the Battalion, we have confidence in recommending this volume to the casual reader.







MAJOR-GENERAL SIR REGINALD PINNEY,  
K.C.B., COMMANDING 33RD DIVISION, B.E.F.,  
FRANCE. NOVEMBER, 1916 TO FEBRUARY,  
1919.

## FOREWORD

BY MAJOR-GENERAL SIR REGINALD PINNEY, K.C.B., COMMANDING  
33RD DIVISION, 1916-1919.

**I**N 1914, the utmost help Infantry could hope for from Machine Guns, was the fire from two Maxims, which were part of the Battalion equipment. Battalions often found one or both guns out of action for one reason or another. In defensive actions, during the first six months of the war, the marvellous fire power of the highly trained regular Infantry beat the enemy to such an extent, that the German Higher Command excused their defeat by saying the "British Machine Guns rendered any advance impossible."

By degrees Machine Gun Companies, manned by the Machine Gun Corps, were attached to Brigades, and for the last two phases of the war we have had Machine Gun Battalions in each Division.

When heavily attacked by the Germans last Spring, the enormous fire power of the Machine Guns made itself very obvious to ourselves and to the enemy.

When it came to our turn to attack, the British Machine Guns fired so accurately on those of the enemy, and had such decisive effect upon his forward guns, supports and reserves, that our Infantry could advance with comparatively few casualties.

This material result of the Machine Gun fire has undoubtedly had a decisive effect on the enemy. Great as this effect has been, I unhesitatingly state that the high moral of Lieutenant-Colonel Hutchison, and of the Officers and men in his Battalion, has had even greater effect.

It has been the force and the power which made possible the deeds narrated in this Record. It also spread and strengthened the moral of the 33rd Division.

REGINALD PINNEY.

33rd DIVISION,  
*24th December, 1918.*







CAPT. (TEMPY. LIEUT.-COL.) GRAHAM SETON  
HUTCHISON, D.S.O., M.C. 3RD BATTN.  
ARGYLL & SUTHERLAND HIGHLANDERS AND  
MACHINE GUN CORPS, 1914-1919.



## CHAPTER I.

### EARLY HISTORY—FORMATION OF THE MACHINE GUN CORPS. CUINCHY AND CAMBRIN.

The 33rd Division under the command of Major-General Landon, C.B., left the United Kingdom for France in November, 1915. It was then composed of New Army Units. Very shortly after arrival, the Division was reconstructed, the 19th Brigade replacing the 99th Brigade, and three war-worn Battalions of the 5th Brigade replacing three of the New Army.

In the New Year, 1916, the constitution of the Division, which took over the line at Cuinchy and Cambrin, was as under :—

#### 19TH INFANTRY BRIGADE.

- 2nd Battalion, Royal Welsh Fusiliers.
- 1st Battalion, Scottish Rifles (The Cameronians).
- 5th-6th (T) Battalion, Scottish Rifles.
- 20th (S) Battalion, Royal Fusiliers.

#### 98TH INFANTRY BRIGADE.

- 1st Battalion, Middlesex Regiment.
- 2nd Battalion, Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders.
- 4th (S.R.) Battalion, The King's (Liverpool) Regiment.
- 4th (T.) Battalion, Suffolk Regiment.

#### 100TH INFANTRY BRIGADE.

- 1st Battalion, The Queen's (R.W.S.) Regiment.
- 2nd Battalion, The Worcestershire Regiment.
- 9th (T.) Battalion, H.L.I. (Glasgow Highlanders).
- 16th (S.) Battalion, King's Royal Rifle Corps.

At this period the Machine Gun Corps had just received sanction. The only formed Machine Gun Company within the Division was the 19th under command of Captain Pery Knox-Gore. In both the other Brigades the

## *EARLY HISTORY*

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Regimental Machine Gun Sections were still with their Battalions, Brigaded under the Brigade Machine Gun Officers, Captain C. D. Jay with the 98th Brigade, and Captain G. S. Hutchison with the 100th Brigade. In January, however, both Captains Jay and Hutchison were sent to Grantham to train, and bring back to the B.E.F. Machine Gun Companies for their Brigades. These two Machine Gun Companies arrived in France in April, 1916. A large number of men from the old Regimental Machine Gun Sections were absorbed into the Companies and transferred to the Machine Gun Corps. From the first, therefore, each Machine Gun Company had the experience of at least one Officer and many N.C.O.'s and men with experience, coming from Machine Gun Sections which had already won distinction in France. At Le Cateau, the Marne, the Aisne, Ypres, Ploegstreet and Armentieres in 1914; and at Neuve Chapelle, La Bassee and Loos in 1915, the Machine Gun Sections had fought with great distinction. The honours already won included Lieutenant R. Liddell, the Military Cross, C.S.M. A. Kiddie and Lance-Sergeant P. Dean, the Distinguished Conduct Medal.

It was insisted from the first that the personnel of Machine Gun Companies should be of the finest. Despite the natural opposition of Battalion Commanders to parting with the cream of their Battalions, this was carried out.

The unique position which this Battalion won for itself in action and in rest within the Division, and in the Machine Gun Corps, was very largely due to its foundation upon tried and experienced soldiers and the selected physique and brains of the Regimental Sections.

No part of the United Kingdom was particularly represented, even if there was a Scottish flavour, due to the strong representation of the Scottish Rifles, H.L.I. and Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders.

Every County was fairly represented, so that the Machine Gun Companies were enriched by the peculiar fighting qualities of men from every district and town.

The reconstructed Division took over the line on the La Bassee front at the end of December, 1915, occupying the intricate trench system around the Canal, Cuinchy, the Brick-stacks and Cambrin. The activities of this Sector were mostly confined to raids, mine crater and Grenade warfare; but during the months of January to June a very valuable training period was provided in this Sector and time given for the newly constructed Companies to get on their feet.





THE OLD MAXIM GUN. WITH THE  
19TH BRIGADE IN THE TRENCHES. BOIS  
GRENIER. 2ND BATTN. A. & S. HIGH-  
LANDERS.



SGT. A. KIDDIE AND L.-SGT. P. DEAN,  
2ND BATTN., A. & S. HIGHLANDERS.  
NOW R.S.M. A. KIDDIE, M.C. D.C.M.,  
AND MAJOR P. DEAN, M.C., D.C.M.  
AND BAR. 33RD BATTN. M.G.C.



ONE OF THE FIRST VICKERS GUNS IN  
ACTION ON THE BRITISH FRONT. RUE  
DE BOIS. DECEMBER, 1914.





AEROPLANE PHOTOGRAPH SHOWING MINE  
CRATERS AND TRENCH SYSTEM LA BASSEE-  
GUINCHY FRONT. MAY, 1916.

PERSPECTIVE SKETCH PLAN OF THE  
SOMME BATTLEFIELDS OF THE 33RD  
DIVISION. JULY-NOVEMBER, 1916.







## EARLY HISTORY

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Opposition had to be met, with Brigades and Battalions unaccustomed to the new branch of the service. For Commanders of Companies in particular, this was not a particularly happy period. It was a foregone conclusion that they were quite incapable of handling a Company or of undertaking the responsibility of a large transport; but with kindly help, and after many, no doubt, well earned "strafes" the Companies were to prove during the early days of the Somme offensive that they were both efficient internally, and could, when called upon, play a very important part in battle.

The part played by the Machine Guns in these operations was not great. Overhead fire from the Reserve Lines in the neighbourhood of Hertford Lane and Old Boots Trench was not a pleasant operation. The German gunners had these salubrious alleys registered to an inch and no sooner did the Machine Guns commence operations than a storm of "whiz-bangs" invariably was showered around their position. From the chalk surrounding one of the craters an admirable view could be obtained of the Hun miners entering and leaving one of their mine shafts behind a brick-stack in their lines. An O.P. and telephone was fixed up here, in connection with two guns firing indirect from the Support line. Quite a few Huns were "strafed" by this method.

The most notable raids carried out were those of the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders near New Year Crater, the 2nd Royal Welsh Fusiliers, in revenge for a German "blow" which had cost them heavily, and by the 9th H.L.I., who, under Captain Frame carried out a particularly brilliant raid, with many prisoners captured, on the 27th June.

The Machine Guns assisted in these raids by firing upon enemy Machine Guns in action, themselves being subjected to the worst of the retaliatory bombardment. Distinction was won by the 100th Company on the 27th June, both Corporal McClellan and Private McKecknie being awarded the Military Medal.

At the end of June, 1916, the Division was transferred to the Somme Area to take part in the great offensive.

## CHAPTER II.

### THE SOMME OFFENSIVE, JULY, 1916, TO FEBRUARY, 1917.

HIGH WOOD. GALLANTRY OF THE 100TH MACHINE GUN COMPANY. DELVILLE WOOD. LES BŒUFS. RANCOURT. BOUCHAVESNES. CLERY.

#### FIRST PHASE : 1ST JULY TO 1ST AUGUST.

At the beginning of July, 1916, the Division moved down to the Somme area to take part in the great offensive battle. Having detrained near Amiens, the Division proceeded by march route to Fricourt in intense heat and dust, and bivouacked there on the night of the 13th July. On the 14th the Division moved up across the captured German Trench system, with the 100th Brigade leading, followed by the 98th Brigade and with the 19th Brigade in reserve. The 100th Brigade was bivouacked in Caterpillar Valley, just west of Bazentin le Grand.

On the evening of the 14th, orders were received for a further general attack upon a wide front, the 100th Brigade being allotted the task of capturing Martinpuich and High Wood on the Flers Ridge, and of extending the attack eastwards.

Patrols were immediately pushed into High Wood from the 9th H.L.I. and the 1st Queen's Regiment, accompanied by one section of the 100th Machine Gun Company under Lieutenant Scott.

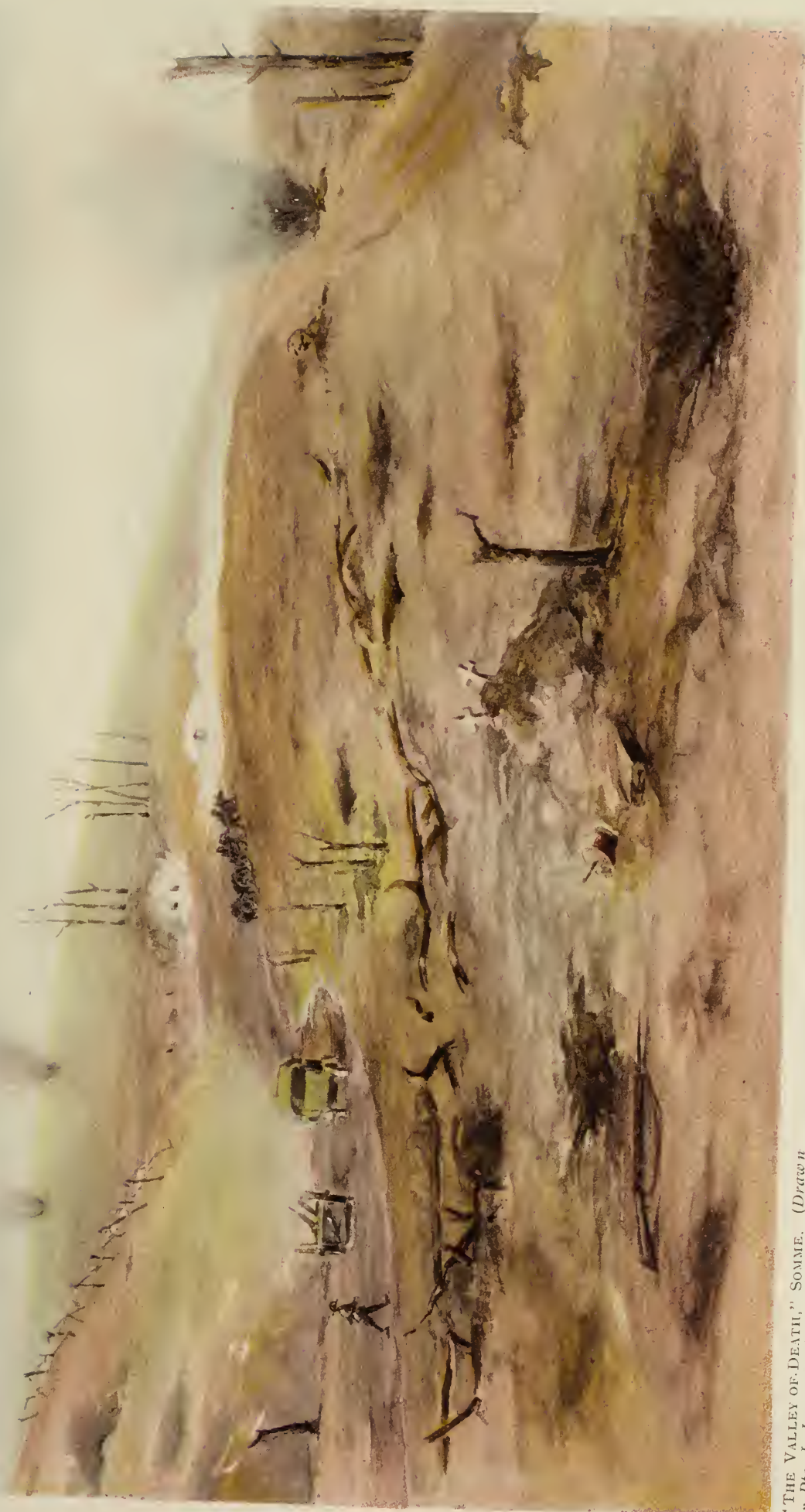
Very little time was possible for reconnaissance. At dawn on the 15th July a thick ground mist covered the whole of the valley lying east of the Village of Bazentin, and completely obscuring High Wood and Martinpuich.

The Glasgow Highlanders reported the wood to be strongly held by Machine Guns. It was necessary to concentrate and deploy the 100th Brigade in the open valley, under enemy observation at a mile range, without any covered approaches or other cover. General Baird repeatedly asked for a hurricane bombardment of the wood. This was found to be impracticable.



BDE.-GENL. A. W. F. BAIRD, C.B., C.M.G.,  
D.S.O., COMMANDING 100TH INFANTRY BRIGADE  
(FEB., 1916 - FEB., 1919), WITH HIS BRIGADE  
MAJOR AND ARTILLERY F.O.O., IN MARMETZ  
WOOD, JULY, 1916. (From an official photo-  
graph.)





"THE VALLEY OF DEATH," SOMME. (Drawn by Pte. J. Jameson, from a Sketch by Capt. G. S. Hutchison, M.C.)

[Printed by Waterlow Br. & Layton, Limited.]





BATTLE ACTION OF THE 100TH M.G.  
COMPANY AT HIGH WOOD, 15TH JULY, 1916.  
(From a *Painting* by the Publications Branch,  
the M.G.T.C., Grantham.)





The Brigade was therefore concentrated in the valley about 800 yards east of High Wood. The Queen's were ordered to attack on the left, and the H.L.I. on the right, the attack being supported by the 16th K.R.R.C., with the 2nd Worcesters in reserve.

Each battalion in the forward wave was supported by one Machine Gun Section, that with the Glasgow Highlanders under Lieutenant Huxley, and that with the Queen's under Lieutenant Heseltine.

Under cover of the mist the transport was able to get right forward to the area of concentration.

Meanwhile the 98th Brigade with its Machine Gun Company was concentrated in position in the eastern outskirts of Bazentin le Petit.

At 9 a.m. the mist rose. The attack was ordered at 9.30 a.m. Under cover of a weak bombardment the attack swept forward, to be met on both flanks by murderous machine gun fire from the wood itself and from Martinpuich. Both the Queen's and H.L.I. were practically annihilated. Lieutenant Heseltine was seriously wounded and Lieutenant Huxley was killed. At the same time, an enemy bombardment of great intensity was opened. By 10 a.m. the attack was held up. Captain Hutchison then moved forward the remaining two sections under the hottest fire to within 150 yards of the wood, to engage the enemy in High Wood, who were even posted in the trees; and rushed forward two companies of the 16th K.R.R.C., who had no officers left, in support of his guns. This fire inflicted heavy casualties upon the enemy, particularly the guns of Lieutenant C. L. Davey, Sergeant Barnes, and Lieutenant Vaughan-Williams, who broke up a strong enemy counter attack on the wood, and was himself killed.

By 12 noon the Worcestershires were able to obtain a footing in the wood, and the 98th Brigade began to come up on the left, and fill the gap in which the 1st Queen's had been annihilated.

The casualties of the 100th Company had now reached five Officers and forty-four Other Ranks.

The Brigade on the right was now showing signs of weakness and began to dribble back. An attempt was made to hold them, but the opposition was too great. This exposed the right flank of the 100th Brigade on the south-west side of the wood. The situation was most desperate and at 3 p.m. owing to the very heavy casualties of the Brigade it was thought that the ground won could not be held. The complete teams of six guns of the 100th Company were casualties. These guns were gathered up by Captain Hutchison, Lieutenant Davey, Lieutenant Williams, Sergeant Barnes, Private W. Smith and Private Diskin, and got into action as a battery guarding the right flank of the Brigade, whilst the remaining

## THE SOMME OFFENSIVE

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guns were disposed in groups covering the whole front. No further supports came.

It was apparent at 5 p.m. that the whole attack had been a most costly failure. General Baird wrote of the 100th Company that the whole Company had behaved with the greatest gallantry.

During the night the remains of the Company, with its guns, occupied a small trench just west of the wood. The enemy bombardment became so severe that it was decided to retire still further. Had this decision not been made there is no doubt that the Company would have perished to a man.

On the morning of the 16th, the 19th Brigade relieved the 100th Brigade and the remains of the Brigade returned to defensive positions on the North side of Mametz Wood.

The following awards were made for the action :—

Military Cross	..	..	Captain Hutchison.
			Lieutenant Davey.
D.C.M.	..	..	Sergeant Barnes (and direct Commission in the Field for gallantry).
			Private Diskin.
			Private Bradbury.
M.M.	..	..	Private W. Smith

Fighting of the bitterest nature followed, in which both the 19th and 98th Brigades were involved. The Cameronians and the 5th Scottish Rifles. in particular sustained very heavy losses. It was apparent that the attack was held up, and retention of the ground gained became more and more costly owing to very heavy shell fire. Trenches and communications were dug by night by the 18th Battalion Middlesex Regiment (Pioneers), only to be obliterated in daylight. It was possible to sit on the Western edge of High Wood and actually to see the heavy shells in the air for about the last 40 feet of their descent before the deafening roar of their explosion and the upheaval of earth and roots and clouds of brown dust.

Early in August the Division was relieved for a short rest and was bivouacked in the battle area round Mametz Wood. The 100th Machine Gun Company was ordered to place guns in the 1st Division Area at Contalmaison to reduce the fire from Martinpuich flanking our High Wood position. Sniping in this area was very severe and the German snipers exceedingly bold. Lieutenant Hyland, in charge of these guns, was killed whilst boldly searching in broad daylight for these snipers in "No Man's Land."



"HAPPY VALLEY," SOMME. (Drawn by Pte  
I. Jameson, from a Sketch by Capt. G. S  
Hutchison, M.C.).





HILL 50, BOUCHAVESNES, SOMME. (From a Sketch by Capt. G. S. Hutchison, M.C.)



DELVILLE WOOD. (From an official photograph.)



SECOND PHASE : 1ST AUGUST TO 1ST NOVEMBER.

The 33rd Division having been reinforced resumed the offensive upon High Wood and the high ground between High Wood and Delville Wood on the 18th August. During the interval which had elapsed between the 15th July and this date, the Germans had considerably strengthened their positions; and it was necessary by minor operations to seize certain important trenches before a general attack could be made. This done, an attack on a wide front was planned for the 24th August. It is believed for the first time in the history of Machine Guns, a Machine Gun barrage was planned to cover this attack, the guns employed being those of the 19th and 100th Machine Gun Companies and of the 14th and 23rd Divisions.

Both the 19th and 98th Brigades had already obtained tactical advantages previous to this date at High Wood and in the capture of Orchard Trench, Black Watch Trench and the snipers' post east of Black Watch Trench; Sergeant Beard of the 98th Machine Gun Company being awarded the Military Medal for gallantry whilst assisting the 2nd Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders in a further attack through High Wood.

The 100th Brigade was ordered to carry out the attack on the 33rd Divisional front. For this attack six guns were grouped in Savoy Trench, from which a magnificent view was obtained of the German line at a range of about 2,000 yards. These guns were disposed for barrage. On August 23rd and the night of the 23rd-24th the whole Company was, in addition to the two Companies of Infantry lent for the purpose, employed in carrying water and ammunition to this point. Many factors in barrage work which are now common knowledge had not then been learned or considered. It is amusing to-day to note that in the orders for the 100th Machine Gun Company's barrage of ten guns, Captain Hutchison ordered that rapid fire should be maintained continuously for twelve hours, to cover the attack and consolidation. It is to the credit of the gunners and of the Vickers gun itself that this was done! During the attack on the 24th, 250 rounds short of one million were fired by ten guns; at least four petrol tins of water besides all the water bottles of the Company and the urine tins from the neighbourhood were emptied into the guns for cooling purposes; and a continuous party was employed carrying ammunition. Private Robertshaw and Artificer H. Bartlett between them maintained a belt-filling machine in action without stopping for a single moment, for twelve hours. At the end of this time many of the N.C.O.'s and gunners were found asleep from exhaustion at their posts. A prize of five francs to the members of each gun team firing the greatest

## *THE SOMME OFFENSIVE*

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number of rounds was offered and was secured by the gun team of Sergeant P. Dean, D.C.M., with a record of just over 120,000 rounds.

The attack on the 24th August was a brilliant success, the operation being difficult and all objectives taken within a very short time.

Corporal Smith, M.M., Corporal Hendrie, Lance-Corporal Sorbie and Gunners McIntyre and Owden, both the latter acting as runners, were all awarded the Military Medal.

Prisoners examined at Divisional and Corps Headquarters reported that the effect of the Machine Gun barrage was annihilating, and the counter-attacks which had attempted to retake the ground lost were broken up whilst being concentrated east of the Flers Ridge and of High Wood.

The work of the Transport during these operations was particularly arduous. No driver in charge of ammunition will ever forget the perils and horrors of the "Valley of Death" and the "Green Dump," the Valley itself being continuously soaked in gas and an unceasing bombardment being maintained upon its whole length. The casualties on this occasion were not heavy, but Sergeant Oates, the Seaman, who was killed, will always be remembered.

The operations ended in the capture of Delville Wood but the N.E. Corner of High Wood still remained in the hands of the enemy.

At the end of September the Division was withdrawn from the forward area and proceeded by train to Longpre to the Longpre-Airaines area, where it was billeted.

This will always be remembered as one of the few pleasant and long rests that the Division has spent in France.

It was realized by the 100th Machine Gun Company that if the Companies' Christmas Dinners were not held during this rest there was no doubt they would be held amongst the shell holes. It was therefore decided to hold it in the first week of November.

An enormous vault under the Château was employed for this purpose, fitted with a stage and electric light. The "Shrapnels," who at this period were at their best, were invited to attend the dinner and to entertain afterwards. Both the dinner and concert were universally voted a brilliant success.

### THIRD PHASE: 1ST NOVEMBER, 1916, TO 1ST MARCH, 1917.

The day following the dinner the Division moved again to the forward area and bivouacked on the 2nd November beside Trones Wood in the open. During the Division's absence from the forward area High Wood and the





THE BATTLEFIELD, LES BOEUFs, (From an Oil Sketch by Capt. G. S. Hutchison, M.C.)

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## THE SOMME OFFENSIVE

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Flers Ridge had eventually been captured by the employment of more than ten Divisions.

The weather had entirely broken. The roads were a morass of treacly mud through which stuck out tree stumps and branches at all angles, which were supposed to form their foundation. Cover of every description had been swept aside by shell fire and every yard of ground was pitted by deep shell holes. The artillery on both sides had continually increased as the fighting became more and more local. At this period Major-General R. J. Pinney, C.B., took over command of the Division from Major-General Landon.

On the 3rd November the 19th and 98th Brigades, with the French on the immediate right of the Division, took over the line East of Les Bœufs and Guinchy, with their supports lying in the old German trench known as the Flers Line. From the Flers Line itself, could be seen the towers of Bapaume; and it was obvious that the intention was to capture Le Transloy and Rocquigny and then to outflank Bapaume itself, which lay about three miles distant. It was equally obvious, however, to those who took over the line that, owing to the state of the ground in the valley between Les Bœufs and Le Transloy, the thick ground mists which prevented accurate artillery observation, and the large amount of wire which the enemy had already put out, that an attack at this time of the year across a quagmire completely intersected with shell holes would be an almost impossible task. The repeated attacks carried out on the 3rd and 4th November by the Division upon Hazy Trench, which was indeed hazy for it could not be found on the ground but only on the map, Antelope Trench, German Trench, Brimstone Trench and trenches with other evil sounding names; the very heavy casualties incurred; the extreme difficulty of getting back wounded across the ground on which it was almost impossible for an armed man to move himself, let alone carry a wounded comrade; the lowering, sunless skies and the torrents of rain, will never be forgotten by those who were forced to take part in these hideous operations. The horror of the day spent in shallow, waterlogged trenches under unceasing fire was even surpassed at night when the full fury of the German guns was let loose. Men disappeared into the night; one knows not to this date their fate, whether destroyed by shell fire, or swallowed up in the yawning shell holes, stifled with mud and water, gripped and paralysed with cold and wounds. The scream of shells, the dull boom of the burst, the chatter of machine guns and the "spat, spat" of heavy rain drops lashing the surface of the quagmire were incessant. The sole duckboard track was torn up or sunken beneath the oozing surface of the ground. Boots were torn from the feet of men held fast in the octopus grip of the mud. Men

## *THE SOMME OFFENSIVE*

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were seen working without any clothing except their shirts and jackets. Exhaustion became a plague. Horses and mules remained to die stuck fast in their tracks. Wagons were abandoned and became the sport of shells. The little wooden crosses daily increased. Every man was buried where he fell, it being impossible to bear him away.

On the 5th November it was decided to have a gala Guy Fawkes day, and the remains of the Division which had repeatedly attempted the feat only to be "bogged" a few yards from our line, and easily shot to pieces like bottles in a fair, were hurled across to take the German trenches surrounding Le Transloy. Success was obtained by the 2nd Worcestershires, who had been concentrated in the French area, and who, under Lieutenant Bennett—who won the V.C. for his exploit—struggled forward some hundreds of yards to the objective and squatted like ducks in the mud, known as Bennett Trench opposite Le Transloy. They were accompanied by two guns of the 100th Machine Gun Company under Sergeant Donaldson, who was awarded the Military Medal. Both Sergeants McLellan and McCallum were reported missing and no trace of them was ever found. The hostile gun fire during this period was most intense and heavy.

Machine Gunners, who fared worse than infantry during this period, commenced their first experience of carrying intolerably heavy loads across several miles of country, which in peace time they would have said it would be impossible to cross unsupported by drag ropes or without salmon waders. The difficulties of keeping guns cleaned and in action in this area was seldom appreciated, and certainly not understood.

From this area the Division, which had lost heavily, was withdrawn for a short period into the wasted areas behind the Somme battlefields, and was moved South on the 3rd December, and took over from the 30th French Division in the Rancourt-Bouchavesnes Sector, opposite St. Pierre Vaast Wood, with its rear echelons and transport lines in the Maurepas Ravine about three miles behind. The conditions in this area were even worse than those of the previous month in the Les Bœufs Sector. Roads did not exist; not a stick of vegetation was living, nothing but stunted trees and tangled scrub remained of the vast boar forests and pleasant parks of this district in pre-war days. One communication trench, three kilometres long, only existed; and this was subjected from morning till night to a heavy bombardment; and, in any case, the water-logged condition of the ground made it almost impassable.

The commencement of this trench was known as "Angostura." Had its end been termed "Bitters," it would not have been a misnomer. Over and over again men were stuck in the mud, often up to their shoulders,



33RD DIV. FREE TEA ROOM. at Relay Post, CLERY  
Scene is dirty weather 20.2.17.

33RD DIV. TEA ROOM AT THE RELAY POST,  
CLERY, SOMME. FEBRUARY, 1917. (From a  
Sketch by Capt G. S. Hutchison, M.C.)







CORBIE, SOMME. (From a Sketch by Capt  
G. S. Hutchison, M.C.)



## *THE SOMME OFFENSIVE*

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for many hours. Some lived for two days in this bitter cold, buried round the neck in mud, under continuous shell fire, it only being possible to render them assistance, or give them hot stimulants under cover of darkness, until they were dragged out with ropes almost insane, and hideously frost-bitten.

Christmas was spent in this area, probably the worst Christmas in the history of any man who experienced it.

In January the Division side-shuffled still further southwards and took over the line from Bouchavesnes, inclusive, to the bend of the Somme at Clery, including the Island of Ommiecourt, in the river itself. Fortunately, a heavy frost, followed by snow and followed again by hard frost set in at this period and lasted well into February. Conditions became considerably more agreeable; and, as the Somme and its canals froze over, it was possible to take considerably more interest in life; besides which the French had constructed admirable tunnelled dug-outs in which, except in the front system, Machine Gunners were able to take cover, whilst an excellent supply of Tommy's Cookers, cocoa, and comforts was obtained from the Division. The Division, too, established and maintained an excellent tea kitchen at Clery immediately opposite Company Headquarters, which was generously patronised, particularly by ration parties.

The operations in this Sector were confined mostly to raids; keeping oneself warm; and by experiments both by our own and the Boche gunners in trying the effect upon ice of high explosive shells. Of the raids, a particularly fine one was carried out on the 23rd February by the 2nd Battalion, Worcestershire Regiment under the personal direction of Brig.-General Baird, and in which two Officers and forty-one Other Ranks of the Alexandra Guard Grenadier Regiment, were taken prisoners and the whole of the trench system destroyed, at a cost to ourselves of only three casualties. Another raid in which a machine gun and several prisoners were taken was carried out by the Glasgow Highlanders. Both these raids were supported by Machine Gun barrage fire. This was particularly effective from Ommiecourt, which was apparently unsuspected, and from which enfilade fire could be brought to bear and enfilade the whole of the German line.

The first Machine Gun barrage in action on modern lines was carried out on 18th February, covering an attack by the 4th Division opposite Bouchavesnes, when forty-eight guns of the 4th and 33rd Divisions were grouped in batteries in one area. This was organized by Lieut.-Colonel R. G. Clarke, then 15th Corps Machine Gun Officer; and the whole was placed under the command of Major Hutchison, commanding the 100th Machine Gun Company. It was amusing that, although the batteries were under the direct observation of Mt. St. Quentin, and were observed in

## THE SOMME OFFENSIVE

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action, the shells fired at the batteries, although actually pitched amongst the guns ricocheted off the hard, battered and frozen ground and burst in the bank about fifty yards to the rear. Not a single casualty was sustained amongst the gunners on this occasion.

A pleasant and entertaining diversion in this area was found in the defences of Ommiecourt Island, which was inhabited, except for one platoon of Infantry, only by two Sections of Machine gunners.

A French pontoon was "obtained" by the Transport of the 100th Machine Gun Company and towed up the Canal from Suzanne into the Somme opposite the island. Chiefly under the direction of Sergeant Sturch and Privates Willetts and Willesden, the boat was converted into an armoured gun-boat. In order to give her the necessary armoured plating "scrounged" steel helmets were tacked round her sides down to the "Plimsoll mark," and Machine Guns were installed fore and aft. By the time the boat was ready the thaw had already commenced; and it was hoped to manœuvre the boat through the thin ice up to the German line; and co-operate with a Machine Gun landing party in a raid which was planned for the Glasgow Highlanders. A preliminary reconnaissance was carried out by Major Hutchison and Private Morgan across the ice. In order to secure them both against mishap they were both secured with telephone wire. Private Morgan, unfortunately for himself, decided to fall through a shell hole in the ice and was salvaged half drowned. Major Hutchison proceeded as far as the Island about 100 yards from the German line when he floundered through the ice. Twelve "good men" at the end of his telephone cable immediately jerked it taut and proceeded pulling. By a series of these jerks Major Hutchison was retrieved about half the distance across the ice when, owing to a slackening of the wire, he was able to get on to his feet and proceed homewards on his own. But no sooner was he once more started than another jerk came upon the hauser and he was jerked off his feet and tobogganed across the ice. This experiment was repeated several times until he reached home, and was immediately carried to hospital, from whence, having been curiously diagnosed as a case of spotted fever, he escaped and returned to his Company.

No use was finally made of the gun-boat, for, early in March the Division was withdrawn from the line and concentrated for a few days in so-called camps, most of them below water-level near Suzanne; and then proceeded by march route to Corbie, to undergo intensive training for the Spring Offensive. Intensive training consisted chiefly of Football matches, field manœuvres and a well-earned rest, in which military tattoos and entertainments by "The Shrapnels" and Cinema were frequent and at their highest standard.



SKETCH PLAN OF THE 33RD DIVISIONAL OPERATIONS IN THE ARRAS BATTLE. APRIL-JUNE, 1916.



### CHAPTER III.

MARCH TO AUGUST, 1917.

THE BATTLE OF ARRAS—OPERATIONS CULMINATING IN THE CAPTURE OF THE HINDENBURG LINE BEFORE CROISILLES—RACE MEETING AT AYETTE—HORSE SHOW AT CAVILLON.

It had been rumoured for some time that the Division was to take part in a second big British offensive in the neighbourhood of Arras. The Division was moved from Corbie in the last week of March; and, concurrent with its arrival in the concentration area West of Arras, the offensive had already started brilliantly with the capture of Vimy Ridge and villages further South, and a footing obtained in the Hindenburg Line.

As on the Somme, it was again the misfortune of the Division not to be employed in the first successes. By the time the Division arrived at Hamelincourt preparatory to taking over the line, and to resuming the offensive, the enemy, having recovered from his first surprise, had already greatly strengthened his defence, particularly with artillery. The 33rd Division took over from the 21st Division about the 14th April, the 19th Brigade having been detached from the 33rd Division a few days previously to assist the 21st Division in the capture of further trenches, part of the Hindenburg Line defence system North West of Fontaine les Croisilles. When the Division took over, the 19th Brigade was established in the Hindenburg Line and to the south the 100th Brigade occupied posts just East of Croisilles, with patrols gradually moving across the Sensee Valley by night and pushing forward the posts towards the Hindenburg Line as far South as "The Hump," near Bullecourt. To cover these operations the Machine Gunners were very fully occupied with harassing fire.

An attack on a large scale was planned for the 23rd April. In this attack the 98th Brigade was ordered to attack southwards down the Hindenburg Line, chiefly with bombs, and make a junction with the 100th Brigade in the Sensee Valley, the 100th Brigade itself delivering a frontal attack upon the Hindenburg Line. The attack was particularly difficult to carry

out. The Hindenburg Line consisted of a highly fortified front and second line with concrete Machine Gun pill-boxes, some of them with two storeys about every fifty yards along it. Both lines were defended in front by about twenty yards of the thickest wire, and both lines were connected by the most complete system of tunnels and dug-outs that has ever been seen in the history of warfare.

The initial assault of the 98th Brigade attack was carried out by the 2nd Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders and the 1st Middlesex Regiment. The first objective for the 98th Brigade was Fontaine les Croisilles. The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders attacked across the open on the left, the Middlesex on the right down the trench system.

At zero the big barriers across both front and support lines were blown up by mines.

The attack early met with opposition. Even before the troops had got down the slope to the Sensee River one Company each of the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders and Middlesex Regiment found themselves cut off by the enemy between them and our own lines. Several local attempts were made to rescue them, in which the Machine Guns of Lieutenant Sheriff's section, which had followed closely the advance of the Argylls, co-operated.

Towards 5 p.m. large bodies of enemy troops were seen going down the roads into Fontaine. At 5.30 p.m. a counter-attack developed. Our guns were placed on the opposite slope of the hill and had magnificent observation. Sergeant L. Beard with two guns did great havoc amongst masses of enemy troops before they deployed. This N.C.O. showed great fearlessness and a wonderful example. He was wounded badly during the subsequent Boche bombing attack.

The 100th Brigade attacked with the 1st Queen's leading. The attack opened at 3.55 a.m. By this time a great deal more was expected of the Machine Guns than heretofore, and the Infantry had learned to have considerable faith in the overhead barrage. The idea of grouping guns together and of central control had already made itself felt in the Division, and General Pinney ordered that the guns of the 19th and 100th Brigades should be grouped under the command of Major Hutchison to cover the attack of the 100th Brigade. During the night of the 22nd April a very remarkable exploit was carried out by the 100th Machine Gun Company. The whole transport drove down the Sensee Valley into "No Man's Land," protected only by a small patrol of the Worcestershire Regiment and deposited 12 guns in their battery positions and many thousands of rounds of ammunition. The transport returned without any mishap, although it had driven within



100TH MACHINE GUN COMPANY. ARRAS. MARCH, 1917. COMMANDING OFFICER, 2ND IN COMMAND, W.O. AND N.C.O.'S.

Left to Right:—

Top Row: Sgt. Freeman, Sgt. Surgoy, Sgt. Hills, M.M., Sgt. Keeble, M.M., Sgt. Sturch, D.C.M., Sgt. Riley, M.M.

2nd Row: Sgt. Donaldson, M.M., Sgt. Dean, D.C.M., C.Q.M.S. Goddard, Capt. Hutchison, M.C., Lieut. Tanner, C.S.M. Carr, D.C.M., Sgt. Smith, M.M. (Bar), Sgt. Hendrie, M.M. (Bar)

3rd Row: L.-Cpl. Owden, M.M., Cpl. Gaskell, M.M., Cpl. Sorbie, M.M., Cpl. Marshall, Cpl. Hudson, M.M., Cpl. Carmichael, M.M., L.-Cpl. McIntyre, M.M.



SOME OFFICERS OF THE 19TH MACHINE GUN COMPANY. ARRAS, MARCH, 1917.

Lieut. Robertson, 2nd Lieut. Taylor, Lieut. MacQueen, Lieut. Merfield, Capt. Falkner, Lieut. Brogden.









AEROPLANE PHOTOGRAPH SHOWING THE  
HINDENBURG LINE WEST OF FONTAINE-LES-  
CROISILLES.



33<sup>rd</sup> DIVISION ON THE HINDENBURG LINE AT CROISILLES. 27.6.17. 571.

Sketch by Major G. S. Hutchison

33RD DIV. ATTACK UPON THE HINDENBURG LINE, CROISILLES. 20TH MAY, 1917. (Sketched in Action by Major G. S. Hutchison, M.C.)



300 yards of the German Line, and possibly closer to the German Patrols, across "No Man's Land."

For this exploit Sergeant Keeble and Driver Messenger were both awarded the Military Medal for particular skill and daring.

A Battery of 12 Guns was established within 200 yards of the Hindenburg Line on the high ground East of the Sensee River, so that direct fire could be brought to bear on the enemy in Fontaine les Croisilles, and upon those who should be manning the Hindenburg System. In addition, an enfilade barrage was arranged to flank the front of the 98th Brigade attack. This Battery was under the command of Lieutenant G. Harrison. In addition to this, three other batteries of Four Guns each were established East of Croisilles. A forward observation post was placed in the bed of the Sensee River within 100 yards of Fontaine Village, every Battery being connected to it by signal communication. This work was mostly carried out by Corporal Hodson and Signaller Harrington. Three tanks were ordered to assist in the attack.

At dawn on the 23rd the attack commenced, and during the first half hour it was thought that success would be achieved. The 98th Brigade took about 300 prisoners, whilst the Queen's penetrated the wire and established themselves well in the Hindenburg Line with very light casualties. As daylight came, however, it was seen that the Sensee Valley was completely commanded by Machine Gun nests and pill-boxes both North and South of the River. The attack had not yet succeeded in capturing these nests. Very heavy bomb fighting was being carried on and the air could be seen filled with German stick bombs. The bombardment became exceptionally fierce, particularly in the area of the Quarry, and up the Sensee Valley. All communication was destroyed. Light mists hung in the valley, which prevented visual communication. It was during this period that Major Hutchison's groom, Lance-Corporal Clegg, was the only connection between the forward Battalions and Brigade Headquarters. He rode repeatedly with Driver Jones up and down the Sensee Valley with despatches through a hail of shrapnel, H.E. and Machine Gun fire, thereby winning the Military Medal. Several Machine Gunners had been sent forward with the Queen's, including Sergeant Hills, as scouts to select points for our Machine Guns. It was apparent that the Queen's, for the time being at any rate, were cut off from the rest of the Brigade, it being impossible to move up to the Hindenburg Line owing to the very heavy Shell and Machine Gun fire, without incurring the heaviest possible casualties. Moreover, both tanks with the 100th Brigade failed to leave their starting point. By 10 a.m. the situation of the Queen's was desperate. The bombs

## MARCH TO AUGUST, 1917

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of the Queen's were exhausted and it seemed an impossible task to supply them. Nevertheless, the 16th K.R.R.C., who were in support, with the greatest gallantry, and despite the heaviest losses, repeatedly made their way up and down the valley carrying bombs to the Queen's. Owing to the tunnel system it was, on the other hand, an easy matter for the Germans to feed their own troops with bombs and grenades. About 11 o'clock a determined counter-attack by the enemy, who seemed thoroughly to have appreciated the awful plight of the Queen's, drove them and elements of the 16th K.R.R.C. from the Hindenburg Line; and the 98th Brigade, then losing touch, were themselves driven back from their objective. As the men came back, the well posted enemy Machine Guns picked them off like rabbits and scarcely a man returned unwounded. The Queen's after the attack mustered only forty-three men. Meanwhile the Machine Guns, particularly the forward battery, had rendered very valuable services and were again and again thanked by the Queen's during the operation for their help where no one else could render assistance. It is a remarkable fact that the Battery of twelve Guns, although, as previously noted, within 200 yards of the German Line under direct observation, incurred not a single casualty, the bombardment, which was so hideously destructive, falling the whole time about twenty yards behind it.

The result of this attack was a very great disappointment to all, but everything which the highest gallantry could achieve was done to make the attack a success. The Division was withdrawn for a short time to the area of Bienvillers-Pommeroy to refit and receive drafts for further operations.

The losses in this action, although not severe in quantity, were damaging in quality, including Privates McIntyre, M.M., Owden, M.M., Tommy Payne and Billing killed, and Callon, wounded, all five well-known, cheery characters of the 100th Company.

After a period of three weeks' rest the Division again relieved the 21st Division. No further ground had been made during the absence of the 33rd Division, an attack was ordered for the 20th May by the 3rd Army under General Allenby, and the 5th Army under General Gough, on a wide front. The 98th Brigade, under the command of Brigadier-General Heriot-Maitland, was ordered to carry out its attack on identical lines with the attack on the 23rd April. The 100th Brigade was given the most ambitious scheme of a frontal attack on the Hindenburg Line between the Sensee River and the Hump just North of Bullecourt inclusive.

The plan in the minutest detail for this latter part of the attack was most ingeniously conceived by Brig.-General Baird. Instead of at dawn the attack was to be carried out during the Boche breakfast hour shortly





AEROPLANE PHOTOGRAPH SHOWING THE HINDENBURG LINE TRENCHES AND BARBED WIRE DEFENCES. APRIL, 1917.



MM425

BULLECOURT

29 4 17-3

1000'

30'



AEROPLANE PHOTOGRAPH SHOWING THE HINDENBURG LINE TRENCHES EAST OF BULLECOURT.



before 9 a.m., when the German sentries would be unsuspecting. In order to make them still more unalert it was arranged that a squadron of aeroplanes should perform a "stunt" flight low over their lines between 8.30 and 9 a.m. There was to be no bombardment, but, for four minutes covering the initial assault, a hurricane bombardment followed by a protracted bombardment for two hours covering consolidation. The Machine Guns of the 19th and 100th Companies were again grouped for this operation whilst those of the 98th remained independent. The night preceding the attack a camouflaged trench was dug, again within 300 yards of the Hindenburg Line under full observation of the enemy position. Twelve guns were placed in this and their teams were all ready before dawn. A battery of dummy guns and gunners was placed about 100 yards in front and to a flank of the battery position in order to deceive the enemy. Two guns were ordered to go forward with the Worcestershires under Lieutenant Hales and two guns with the 16th K.R.R.C. and Glasgow Highlanders under Lieutenant Scott. In addition to this as a special enterprise two Lewis Guns under the command of Lance-Corporal Samuels with Privates Taylor, Willetts and Willesden as gunners, were given a free hand to work themselves forward by the Sensee Valley into the Hindenburg Line under cover of darkness and to bring fire to bear on any Machine Guns which opened on the attacking troops at zero. So successful was this enterprise that Lance-Corporal Samuels succeeded in working his way right into the line before dawn, and in capturing several prisoners before zero hour.

At zero with three Battalions in line—the 2nd Worcestershires, 16th K.R.R.C. and the Glasgow Highlanders, the attack upon the Hindenburg Line began; and, owing to General Baird's plan of attack, it succeeded in capturing the whole of the front system with a loss of only one man wounded, and the capture of a large number of prisoners. Very soon, however, the enemy opened up his usual fierce bombardment; and the further attack on the Hindenburg Support Line, afterwards known as Tunnel Trench, was unsuccessful, although the Infantry succeeded in establishing themselves between the two lines. In the late afternoon some excellent direct fire sniping was obtained by the 19th and 100th Machine Gun Companies Battery. It had been our experience on the 23rd April that the Germans had consistently and deliberately shot down our stretcher bearers. We were able to return the compliment by the annihilation of nineteen stretcher bearers who were not carrying wounded, but ammunition. This was later confirmed by prisoners. "D" Section of the 100th Machine Gun Company, under Lieutenant Hales, fought with the greatest gallantry and obtained the highest praise from the 2nd Worcestershire Regiment,

Lieutenant Hales being awarded the Military Cross and Corporal Gaskell and Private Rogers the Military Medal. Lance-Corporal Samuels who, at zero was already in the line, headed the attack of the 16th K.R.R.C. with his gun and wrought very heavy execution on the enemy. He afterwards volunteered to proceed to the extreme right of the attack and assist the 2nd Worcestershire Regiment, who had been repeatedly counter-attacked and his gun again did very fine work. He was awarded the D.C.M. The operations were followed by an exchange of compliments between the 9th H.L.I. and the 100th Machine Gun Company. Colonel Menzies wrote: "If we all work together we'll be in Germany some day. You'll never appeal to a deaf ear in the Glasgow Highlanders if it's in their power to assist you." He proved a wise and happy prophet. At 4 o'clock in the afternoon the 19th Brigade was ordered to continue the attack through the 100th Brigade, who by now had suffered considerable casualties from shell fire; and to capture Tunnel Trench. Again and again General Baird called on the Machine gunners for fire assistance and for reconnaissance of the position. This was effectively given and appreciated.

The attack by the 19th Brigade was unsuccessful, whilst it was found increasingly difficult, owing to the uncertain position of the 98th Brigade, to give an effective Artillery barrage.

The attack of the 98th Brigade had gone well forward and two Companies of the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders with some men of the Middlesex Regiment had even reached Cherisy, but owing to the fact that neither the 100th nor the 19th Brigade were able to capture Tunnel Trench, which connected the Sensee Valley through Fontaine, it was impossible for them to hold their ground, and the attack upon Fontaine Village was again a failure. Again no blame can be attached to the troops who took part in it, but rather the highest praise. The very greatest gallantry and determination was shown time after time.

On the 26th May another attempt was made to capture the Hindenburg Support Line. Minor operations during the preceding week, consisting of surprise attacks and bombing raids by day and by night, having failed, an attack on a large scale was organized to be preceded by an intensive artillery bombardment. The attack was carried out by the 2nd Royal Welsh Fusiliers and the 5th-6th Scottish Rifles, supported by the guns of the 19th Machine Gun Company. The guns accompanied the Infantry; six guns covered the advance from the Hindenburg Front Line; and the fire of eight guns was organised as a creeping barrage in front of the advancing troops. At 2 p.m. the Infantry attacked in three waves, the men advancing shoulder to shoulder. But the enemy was fully prepared.





BDE.-GENL. H. HERIOT MAITLAND, C.M.G.,  
D.S.O., COMMANDING 98TH BRIGADE (SEPT.  
1916—NOV., 1918.)

His artillery opened simultaneously with our own. His machine guns had been taken from their emplacements and placed on the parapet in order to increase their field of fire. When our Infantry reached the enemy front line—a distance of about 200 yards—there were many gaps in the line. Devastating fire from the Machine Guns had accounted for many hundreds of men. As they fell in the leading wave, men from the second were rushed forward to take their comrades' places. Thus the second and third waves gradually merged into the first wave. The enemy fought stoutly and climbed out of their trench, lining the parapet to meet our attack. Officers, N.C.O.'s and most of the men were in shirtsleeves. For more than an hour the bitterest hand-to-hand fighting took place and many an individual contest was decided without weapons in "catch-as-catch-can" style, the combatants locked together frequently rolling off the parapet and falling into the trench to be seen no more. When the fighting had reached its height, and with the result still doubtful, the enemy rushed up reinforcements from his reserve trenches and forced back all that were left of our exhausted men. The two forward Machine Guns remained intact, covering the withdrawal of the Infantry by placing an impenetrable curtain of fire across the front. Lieutenant Robertson, who had done magnificent work with his six guns in the Hindenburg Line, was killed whilst most gallantly and personally firing a gun from a sap head. During the withdrawal Sergeant Bull placed two guns on top of a pill-box and engaged enemy Machine Guns, repeatedly knocking out gun numbers and keeping down the enemy's fire during a very anxious period. Corporal Kempself and Private Hughes performed exceptionally gallant work throughout the battle.

The barbarous methods of the enemy were much in evidence after the attack. Until nightfall enemy snipers kept up a continuous fire on our wounded, many of whom were writhing in agony near his line. After dark, enemy patrols came into "No Man's Land," collected our killed and wounded, heaped them into a big pile and lighted an enormous human bonfire.

The Division being relieved by the 50th Division on the night of the 27th-28th May, proceeded to the Hamelincourt Area to refit and for a rest. Both the 19th and 100th Machine Gun Companies volunteered to remain at "Emma Gee Barracks" to prepare new positions and get up ammunition for an attack which had been planned for the early days of June. On the 27th May, General Baird inspected the 100th Machine Gun Company and complimented it in the following words:—

“Major Hutchison, Officers, N.C.O.'s and men of the 100th Machine Gun Company. It is a great pleasure for me to come here to-day to

express my thanks and appreciation of the part you played during the recent operations. When the Company came to my Brigade I told you that you had come to a Brigade where smartness and soldierly bearing, both in the line and in billet, were highly valued. As a regular soldier, I place a high value on smartness of turn-out, and I am glad to say that whenever a ceremonial parade of any kind has been ordered this Unit has been second to none in my Brigade. As regards the recent operations, I have had no opportunity before of expressing my appreciation of the work performed by this Company on April 23rd. It seems unquestionable that the value of sustained Machine Gun fire directed against the enemy's rear communications and support lines inflicted heavy casualties upon him. Again, in the operations of May 20th, I know that the labour entailed in the collection of the necessary stores and ammunition was considerable, but you have the satisfaction of knowing that the machine gun fire aided materially in breaking up and checking enemy counter-attacks, and the effect of your Machine Gun barrage was either to break up these attacks or to weaken them, so that they could be easily repulsed by the men in the trenches. I attach the highest importance to Machine Gun fire and whenever operations have been contemplated, your Commanding Officer has never failed to draw up a full and comprehensive scheme for his Machine Guns.

“Lastly, and this I am sure you will value more than anything I have said, by your good work at all times you have won the respect and confidence of the rest of the Brigade.

“Once again I thank you for the work performed during the recent operations.”

During this period, the 33rd Divisional Race Meeting was held on a magnificent stretch of ground between Hamelincourt and Alette.





100th Mass. Co. 27/5/17  
S. HUTCHISON

VICKERS GUN IN ACTION BEFORE FONTAINE  
LES CROISILLES. (Sketched in Action by  
Major G. S. Hutchison, M.C.)



## THE ARRAS SPRING MEETING.

(Reproduced by the Courtesy of the Proprietors, from the "Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News," June 20th, 1917.)

THE 1917 Flat Racing Season in the B.E.F. was opened by a Divisional Spring Meeting, last month. The course, situated on a rolling down in a recent "No Man's Land," stretching between three piles of debris and brickdust—lately Epsom, Banstead and Tadworth!—sprang up in a night. It is a short one of five furlongs, and practically straight. Fine weather gave a very enjoyable meeting, and the turf was in splendid condition.

The arrangements made by the Stewards were amazing. The Enclosure and Grand Stand, "For County Gentlemen and Officers Only," with the added legend beneath, "Beware of Pickpockets"; Tattersall's Ring; Paddock and Weighing-in Rooms; Clerk of the Scales; Judge's Box; the white railed course—nothing had been forgotten. "Charlie's Bar" was transferred by special request from Newmarket, with a welcome alteration in prices, which were calculated not to injure the pockets of even heavy drinkers. Had more of the racegoers been aware of this fact earlier, the strain on the barmen might have been severe. A tea room on the same lines was also in evidence and proved almost as popular as its neighbour. The Divisional Staff was most generously "At Home." Tattersall's Enclosure on the other side of the course also provided tea for the asking, provided that the request was accompanied by a mess tin. A crowd representing many English County Regiments, Highland, Lowland, Rifles, and every arm of the Service, besieged the marquee with a babel of noise the whole day.

The tracks leading to the course were a scene of busy movement early in the afternoon.

The runners, not forgetting a large number of mules, totalled several hundred, and these with the crowd who travelled by wagon, by bicycle, by motor, or on foot, resembled big columns, those of some other Divisions, on the march. We had not looked for the "Coach



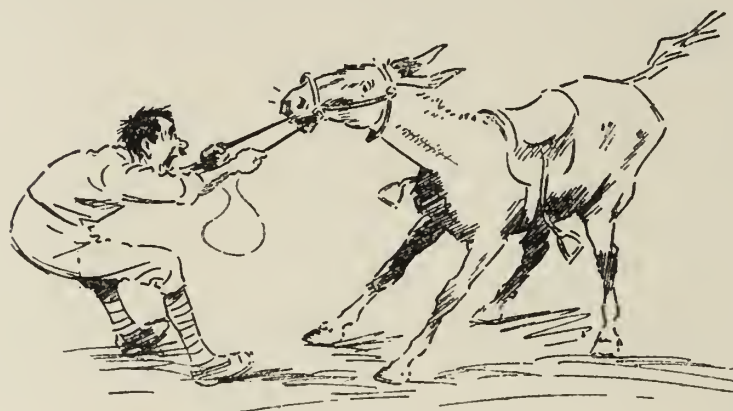
COSTERS.



"DROPPING THE PILOT."

## THE ARRAS SPRING MEETING

Club" on the battlefield. But Brig.-General Baird with that initiative which has made him so distinguished both on the battlefield and in the sporting world



A NON-STARTER.

turned out two light draught horses with his own two chargers as leads, in a four-in-hand, which coach, carrying his own Headquarters as "party," bore a suspicious resemblance to the wagon which brings our rations. A long whip and equally long cigar completed a picture of the late Mr. Vanderbilt at Richmond. The roads leading to the course did not perhaps present such a kaleidoscopic appearance as those to Epsom Downs on Derby Day, due to the lack of variety of the vehicles officially issued to the Army; but the banter, pleasant or otherwise, between the racegoers, was, if anything, even more pronounced. That there is latent eloquence of a high order in every Army driver was demonstrated wherever there was a collision.

The familiar figures with little black bags and large blackboards were absent, doubtless making munitions elsewhere. Nevertheless, Tattersall's Silver Ring was the scene of considerable financial activity among those who had been paid out the same morning, whilst a surreptitious traffic, carried on by orderlies and batmen from the Officers' Enclosure, filed across the course to "Black and White," "Old Joe," and the fraternity, before every race. The odds uncontrolled by any of the aforesaid little gentlemen in broad bowlers, changed with alarming rapidity. The solitary tipster who ventured into the enclosure was unceremoniously dealt with by the only member of the police force in evidence during the day, who showed characteristic promptness on his reappearance in Tattersall's.

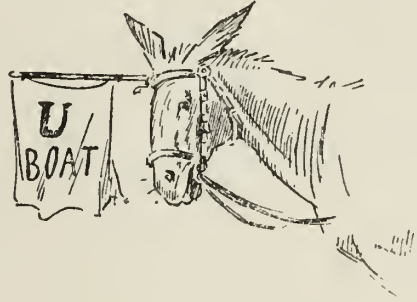


H. M. S. LANDHORSE.

In the paddock could be seen little knots of owners criticising the horseflesh paraded there, some of them, moreover, very temporary owners, who imagine that every animal lent them by a benevolent Government can

## THE ARRAS SPRING MEETING

go "some"—and they can! To stand and listen to the names of the runners being bellowed by relays of heated and thirsty Stewards—hence the relays—was more than amusing. Three mules of vicious tendency—"Faith, Hope and Charity," the most vicious, the greatest of these, "Love," of the Worcestershire Regiment. The Highland Regiments, Argylls and H.L.I. produced such classics as "Flying Fox," "White Heather," "Persimmon" and "Lemberg," amongst animals as nobby and tufted as only the after effects of a winter campaign can make light draught horses. The Middlesex, Queen's and Royal Fusiliers were local and homely, as behoves Cockney humour, "Napoo," "Umteen," "Farrier's Friend"—the unshoeable "U-Boat," and the Bing Boys "George" and "Alfred." The Staff, enjoying the privilege of frequent leave in London and Paris, favoured the stage, thus "Gaby," "Delysia," "Zena" and "Phyllis."



Colour was lent to the scene by members of the chorus of "The Shrapnels Revue Company," who are touring the district. Miss Sadie Sthaies, Miss Clarice Corcette, and Miss Nida Nytie appeared in ravishing toilettes. Two mules were observed to bolt on their approach—presumably to bring their friends. The ladies, to the chagrin of the A.S.C. Sergeant-Majors and other magnates, were escorted by their friends of the Company.



AT CHARLIE'S BAR.

The first race on the programme was the Adinfer Stakes for N.C.O.'s and men, for which there were no fewer than eighty entries, representing all arms of the Service, with the exception of the "Tanks," though an element of the parade gave one an impression that they had entered. This proved one of the most popular events, won by Private Reece's "Billy" by a neck from the Queen's "Black Bess." At the moment the race was ended a diversion was caused by a coster and his wife driving their cart at a gallop the whole length of the course. The man then handed the strings to his wife, leapt out, and with lightning rapidity fooled numerous county gentlemen of the Enclosure with the three card trick. He disappeared with his spoils as rapidly as he had come.

## THE ARRAS SPRING MEETING

Meanwhile the runners for the 3.30 p.m. race, the Alette Maiden Plate, for Officer riders, catchweights, were parading. It was won in the last half-furlong by Lieutenant Kennard's (A.D.C.) "Netta," owner up, from Lieutenant Edward's (Worcestershire Regiment) "Frugal," Captain Paul up, after a race which he kept well in hand. The field numbered forty-two.

The "Domino Stakes," flat race, open to horses belonging to and ridden by members of the Military Mounted Police, followed. It was won by Sergeant Fletcher's "Paddy," from the A.P.M.'s "Black Jester."

The "Boiry Maiden Plate," for Infantry Officers' chargers, catchweights, a very keenly contested race, was won by the Worcestershire Regiment's "Cuthbert," from H.L.I.'s "Ruby," Major Stoney on the former riding a great race from Captain Paul on the latter. Field of thirty-seven.



LT. YATES WINS THE "ST. LEDGER" STAKES ON GIRLIE.

The "St. Ledger Stakes," named not after the famous classic race, but after a captured village in the vicinity, was the event of the day. Open flat race, 12 st., previous winners 14 lb. extra. The R.W.F.'s "Girlie," ridden by Lieutenant Yates at 13 st. 13 lb., won from A.S.C.'s "Francois," Captain Jackson up, with Captain Gordon's (A.V.C.) "Jack Straw," third. It is interesting to recall that "Girlie" was captured from the enemy on the retreat from Mons, and has served with this Battalion throughout the campaign, as has her jockey. She started a hot and popular favourite, being well known for her speed throughout the B.E.F.

The final race at 5.30 p.m. the Prix d'Alphonso, Open Flat Race for Mules, was run in two spasms, owing to the enormous number of entries.

## THE ARRAS SPRING MEETING

It was ridden bareback, and proved most quixotic. The parade to the starting point before the race was almost as interesting as the race itself. Several of the mules, as a protest against delayed feeds, left their riders at the starting point to complete the course on foot. Some remarkable feats of horsemanship, all over the mule, were performed by many riders. In the middle of the first spasm two mules made for home in front of the whole field, scattering the crowd right and left, whilst the coster's wife, still voteless, in spite of Mr. Asquith's recently expressed adherence to her cause, flung her masculine proportions across the course. To those who



GENERAL BAIRD'S "COACH."

witnessed this and the episode at Tattenham Corner, the former was the more heroic.

Throughout the afternoon, owing to the proximity of the battle, a squadron of the Royal Flying Corps patrolled overhead, and effectively kept at a distance the scouts of the enemy. This arduous duty did not prevent some of the pilots exhibiting their skill by looping the loop amid the plaudits of the crowd beneath. The only other guard considered necessary was mounted behind the Enclosure, conceivably behind Charlie's Bar!

## THE ARRAS SPRING MEETING

The Divisional Commander, who rode on to the course with his A.D.C.s early in the afternoon, was the conspicuous figure in the Judge's box, and carried out his duties with that good humour and joviality which has endeared him to all ranks of his Division. Of the jockeys Captain Paul, M.C., who rode in three races, finishing second in two, was outstanding.

The brilliant success of the meeting was entirely due to Major-General R. J. Pinney, C.B., Commanding the Division, who not only fostered the original idea, but personally supervised every detail of the arrangements. These were most ably carried out by Lieut.-Colonel P. G. Lea, D.S.O., A.S.C., Captain B. L. Montgomery, D.S.O., and the indefatigable Hon. Secretary and Treasurer, Major H. C. C. Batten, together with other Stewards.



A REPETITION OF THE TATTENHAM CORNER INCIDENT.

A silver trumpet presented by Captain B. L. Montgomery, D.S.O., for the Unit gaining the highest number of points in the meeting was won by the 2nd Battalion of the Worcestershire Regiment. It is a trophy which, as a souvenir alone, will always have an honoured place in the mess of that Battalion in years hereafter.

The meeting was a triumphant success, and as such is ample proof of the wonderful moral and spirit of our troops lately engaged in very heavy fighting.

On the 2nd June the Division was reviewed by Lieut.-General Sir Thomas Snow, the Corps Commander, who presented Medal Ribbons, and the Division again returned to the line in this area on the 3rd June for offensive

operations. These, however, were at the last moment indefinitely postponed, and nothing but a minor attack by the 1st Queen's supported by the 1st Machine Gun Company was carried out. In this attack Sergeant Riley showed great gallantry and enterprise, and was awarded the Military Medal. After one other short relief and tour in the line the Division was finally withdrawn to Bienvillers-Pommeroy Area.

Unquestionably, as the result of the successful example set by the 33rd Division and a few other Divisions in the grouping of its Machine Guns, now



## THE ARRAS SPRING MEETING

for over a year, the Machine Gun Corps decided to take its first step towards the formation of Machine Gun Battalions; and as a thin end of the wedge a Divisional Machine Gun Officer was appointed. The appointment was given to Major Hutchison, M.C.

From Bienvillers-Pommeroy Area the Division marched into the rest area between Cavillon-Picquigny and Hangest for four weeks. Undoubtedly this was the best period that the Division ever spent in France. The 19th Machine Gun Company was billeted at Bretencourt, the 98th Machine Gun Company at Avelesges, and the 100th Machine Gun Company at Hangest.



A GENERAL VIEW OF THE COURSE. (NOTE PROTECTING AIRCRAFT.)

The weather during this period was perfect sunshine every day. The fullest use was made of the Somme River and its Canals, fishing, swimming, and diving competitions being held, daily bathing parades and voluntary bathing being carried out not only once each day, but all day. A regatta went off with great success. Daily leave was given to Amiens and, as the "largest plum in the pudding," a Horse Show was organized by the Division.

The Horse Show was conducted on the same generous lines as the Race Meeting at Alette; and was held in brilliant weather at Cavillon. The Machine Gun Companies were each fully represented in every class, but owing to the hard line-work to which their animals were always subjected, and the casualties sustained, they were not quite in a position, as far as horse flesh is concerned, to compete with the Headquarters Company of the

## *THE ARRAS SPRING MEETING*

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Divisional Train, R.A.S.C. As was remarked at the time by a Machine Gun Officer: "God made the animals and the A.S.C. dish them out!"

Nevertheless, the 100th Machine Gun Company carried off the first prize in the four-mule turn-out, the first prize in the pair-mule turn-out, in which class Drivers Messenger and Johnson secured the blue ribands; whilst in the single-horse turn-out, in a field of over fifty, Driver Harris secured a "Mention" with "Charlie" in the mess cart, all eyes being taken by his cart with its wonderful burnish and a brilliantly painted tailboard, crest and motto, "Jusqu'au Bout."

The 98th Company showed well with its water cart, which secured a "Mention"; and the 19th Company had good entries in the horse classes, but, as mentioned, was outclassed.

## CHAPTER IV.

SEPTEMBER TO DECEMBER, 1917.

### NIEUPOORT—MENIN ROAD BATTLE—BARRAGE BATTERIES—BRILLIANT ACTION BY THE 33RD DIVISION—MESSINES—PASSCHENDAELE—MACHINE GUN COMPANIES BRIGADED.

The Division was then hurried up to the coast, where the Hun had attacked and practically annihilated the 1st Division, and took over the line, Nieuport inclusive to Lombardtsyde, with the Belgians on its right. The period spent in this sector was about three weeks. It was at this period that two new nuisances became part of everyday warfare in a marked degree—aeroplane bombing by night and the use of mustard gas.

The sector was both unpleasant and uninteresting, except for excellent sea bathing when out of the line.

The 248th Machine Gun Company (called the Divisional Company) under the command of Captain J. R. Bellerby, M.C., had joined the Division towards the end of July, and now was put into the line for the first time with the 19th and 98th Machine Gun Companies.

It was very soon realised that the new Company required a leavening of old and experienced soldiers to bring it up to the standard of the remaining Companies of the Division. Accordingly, several senior N.C.O.'s were transferred to the Company from other Companies in the Division.

Major Jay, D.S.O., who had gone sick, was relieved by Captain Lomax in command of the 98th Machine Gun Company; the 19th Machine Gun Company was still commanded by Captain Falkner, who had taken over its command in November, 1916, from Captain Pery Knox-Gore, and Captain Cartwright had relieved Major Hutchison of the 100th Machine Gun Company on his appointment as D.M.G.O., in command of the 248th Machine Gun Company.

Major-General Pinney, to the regret of all in the Division, was obliged to temporarily relinquish his command, sick, and was relieved by General P. Wood, C.B., D.S.O.

The Division was withdrawn from the Nieuport Sector to the Epeleques Training Area early in September.

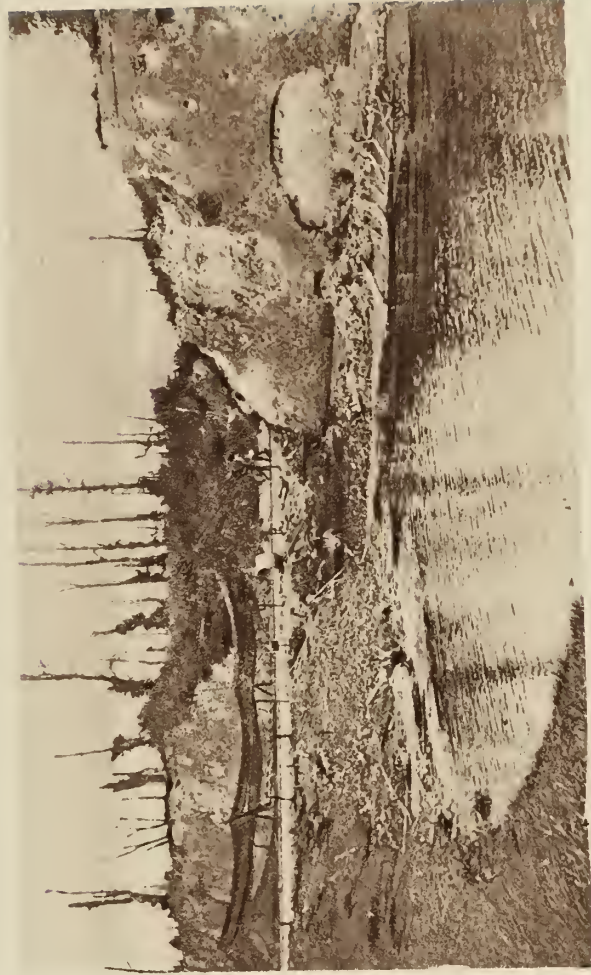
By now it had been fully realised, both by the unfortunate Officer who held the appointment, and by the four Machine Gun Companies, that the position of a D.M.G.O. was ludicrous. In the Army, one gives or receives orders; one neither gives nor receives advice. The giver, at any rate, is likely to be told to mind his own business. A further step in the formation of the Machine Gun Battalion of to-day was therefore seriously considered.

The third great battle of Ypres had already begun, and so obsessed now was the higher command by the Machine Gun barrage, that the Machine Gun Companies of every available Division were crowded into the line to support the new offensive. Accordingly, half the 19th and 248th Machine Gun Companies were despatched by train from Watou to Dickebusch, where they camped, to construct barrage positions and carry up ammunition to the neighbourhood of Stirling Castle, a fortnight before the operation was undertaken. A week later Major Hutchison, with the remaining half of these two Companies, joined the advance party, and these two Companies, under his command were attached for operations to the 23rd Division. The whole scheme consisted of many hundreds of guns co-ordinated by Lieutenant-Colonel Bidder, the 10th Corps Machine Gun Officer. The Division with the 98th and 100th Machine Gun Companies followed into the Dickebusch Area on the 18th instant, but by this time the 19th and 248th Companies with the D.M.G.O., co-operating with the 23rd Division, had moved forward to their barrage positions to take part in the first big assault on the line of the Belgian Hills which run through Inverness Copse, Polygon Wood and thence to Passchendaele and Westroosbeke. On the morning of the 20th the assault was made. It was unfortunate that the position of our batteries supporting the 23rd Division lay in the middle of the Boche barrage line. This had never happened to us previously, nor has happened since, and on this occasion the position was none of our selection. No sooner had the attack commenced than two complete gun teams of the 248th Company were killed, and Captain J. R. Bellerby was severely wounded with several other men.

The first and second phases of the attack, including the capture of Inverness Copse and Dumbarton Lakes, was a complete success. For the next phase it was necessary to move forward the barrage positions to the edge of Inverness Copse. This was an exceedingly arduous operation, but was carried out to time under very heavy fire, most ably directed by Captain Falkner. The Machine Guns were thus able to cover the third phase of the attack, which included the capture of the Tower Hamlets Ridge. During



CAPT. G. FALKNER, M.C., COMMANDING 19TH  
M.G. COMPANY, WOUNDED, AND LIEUT.  
STOKES, KILLED IN ACTION, AT HOLYBONES  
DUG-OUT



THE MENIN GATE, YPRES.



THE SQUARE AND CLOTH HALL, YPRES.



MAJOR G. S. HUTCHISON, M.C., 33RD DIV  
M.G.O. AT NORTHAMPTON FARM.



this operation Captain Falkner was severely wounded. For this action, which occupied both the 20th and 21st September, the following awards were made in the 19th Machine Gun Company. :—

Captain Falkner was awarded the Military Cross.

Sergeant Gillespie was awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal ; and Private Dellenty the Military Medal.

In the 248th Machine Gun Company, Sergeant Dean (who had been transferred from the 100th Company) was awarded a Bar to his D.C.M., and Sergeant Goode the Military Medal.

On the morning of the 22nd September, both these Companies were relieved, and returned to Dickebusch.

Already orders had been issued for a second attack upon the great Belgian Ridge to include the capture of Polygon Wood, the Reutelbeke and Polderhoek Château on the 33rd Divisional front. Very little time was available for reconnaissance and for the dumping of ammunition in the forward area, which entailed a "carry" from Valley Cottages to Inverness Copse, and in the case of one Company as far as Northampton Farm, of about two miles, across very broken and boggy country. For the 33rd Divisional attack, the 98th Brigade was selected to attack on the left and the 100th Brigade on the right. The 19th, 248th and 207th (Independent) Machine Gun Companies were selected as the Barrage groups. The 19th Brigade was ordered in support.

By 12 midnight on the 24th-25th September, both the 98th and 100th Brigades were concentrated for the attack. In the 98th Brigade, the 2nd Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, 1st Middlesex and 4th King's; and in the 100th Brigade the 9th H.L.I. and 1st Queen's being the leading Battalions with the 98th and 100th Machine Gun Companies concentrated to support their own Brigades. The 207th Machine Gun Company, under Captain Gelsthorpe, was ordered to be in position by 1 a.m. on the morning of the 25th, about 150 yards behind our front posts, close to Northampton Farm, disposed in two batteries of eight guns each ; the 19th Machine Gun Company was ordered to be in position by 3 a.m. just West of Inverness Copse, disposed in two batteries of eight guns each ; the 248th Machine Gun Company was ordered to be in position by dawn on the 25th September, disposed in two batteries of eight guns each, opposite Bodmin Copse. The attack of the Second Army, including the 33rd Division, was ordered for dawn on the 26th instant. At about 3.30 on the morning of the 25th, the enemy opened a bombardment of hitherto unparalleled intensity upon our front. The S.O.S. Signal was seen at every point, and our Machine Guns of the

19th and 207th Machine Gun Companies, which were in position, opened fire. So intense was the bombardment and in such great depth upon our rear communications, that it was impossible to get the transport of the 248th Company up the roads. An attempt was made by Lieutenant Franklin and Sergeant Tyson, but the Company suffered such severe casualties in vehicles, animals and personnel, that it was determined to await a lull before proceeding. Lieutenant Franklin, who was commanding the 248th Company, himself went forward and reported to Major Hutchison. Meanwhile, at dawn, following up their bombardment, the enemy counter-attacked in massed formation upon our lines, no less than five Divisions being used in this attack upon the Divisional front. We had already suffered exceedingly heavy casualties from the bombardment. Inverness Copse, in particular, in which were concentrated two Battalions having been swept as though with a scythe. The posts of the Queen's were driven in and two Companies at least either slaughtered or captured. The Glasgow Highlanders, fighting with great courage, were driven back as were the 2nd Worcestershires and the 4th King's. The 1st Middlesex and Ninety-third held their ground, two Companies of the latter Regiment being completely cut off from the rest of their Battalion, with the enemy in between them and their friends. It was during this attack that most valuable services were rendered by Lieutenant Huskisson, Sergeant Heanley, Corporal Gates, Corporal Hudson and Private Samuels, of the 100th Machine Gun Company, in support of the 2nd Worcestershires and 4th King's. Two gun teams were cut off and attacked with Flammenwerfer. The teams fought to the last, being either shot dead or hideously burnt, wounded and captured. Private Rogers, M.M., who was taken prisoner and now released, wrote confirming the heavy casualties inflicted on the enemy. Lieutenant Adams and Sergeant Harris of the 98th Company, on the flank of the Division co-operating with the Australians in Polygon Wood also did fine work.

The 207th Company, which, as already noted, was close behind our front line grouped in batteries, opened fire with sixteen guns at almost point-blank range into the massed hordes of the enemy. The enemy was concentrated behind Polderhoek Château Ridge, and as soon as their bodies were seen down to the knee topping the lines, Captain Gelsthorpe's batteries opened a murderous fire into their ranks. Low flying enemy aeroplanes soon, however, detected him and both by machine gunning and directing artillery upon the 207th Machine Gun Company, the enemy inflicted very severe casualties amongst the gunners. Capt Gelsthorpe realized that his position was untenable and withdrew his guns, excepting four which had been totally destroyed, in perfect order to a new position East of Stirling







Porte St. Martin, YPRES. (From a Sketch  
by Major G. S. Hutchison, M.C.)

WYTSCHAETE GROUP 4<sup>TH</sup> GERMAN ARMY

50<sup>TH</sup> RESERVE DIVISION  
231<sup>ST</sup> R.I.R.

229<sup>TH</sup> R.I.R.

230<sup>TH</sup> R.I.R.

Cameron H<sup>o</sup>

Cameron Copse

GHEULEVELT

4<sup>TH</sup> ARMY

ASSAULT BATTALION

Black Watch Corner

Northampton Fm

Veldhoek

Rifle Corps

YPRES-MENIN ROAD

Tower Hamlets

Glencorse Wood

Fitzclarence Em

Ch<sup>o</sup>

Herenthage Ch<sup>o</sup>

Clapham Jun<sup>o</sup>

In-4-ene<sup>o</sup>

Copse

Dumbarton Lakes

Ch<sup>o</sup>

Wood

Holybone

Bodmin Copse

Clonmel Copse

Observatory Ridge

Torr Top

Battle of the YPRES-MENIN ROAD.  
Operations by X CORPS, 2<sup>ND</sup> ARMY, between  
POLYGON WOOD & GHEULEVELT,  
8 a.m. 28<sup>TH</sup> September 1917.  
33<sup>RD</sup> DIVISION.

33<sup>RD</sup> DIVISIONAL OPERATIONS ON THE MENIN ROAD, YPRES. 25<sup>TH</sup>-26<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER, 1917. (From a Drawing by L.-Cpl. H. D. Bryden.)



Castle, dug in, relaid his lines and personally reported what he had done. During the whole period Captain Gelsthorpe and his two remaining Officers, one of whom was wounded, and his whole Company, such as were left of them, displayed the most conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty and inflicted enormous losses on the enemy. No less gallant work was done by the 19th Machine Gun Company, which, although more fortunate in its position, answered twenty-one S.O.S. calls, being the whole time exposed to the heaviest shell fire. Every prisoner taken reported the annihilating effect of the Machine Gun Barrage, and the hideous losses inflicted both on their attacking and supporting troops. Lieutenant Stokes was killed whilst gallantly directing the fire of his guns.

In the 207th Machine Gun Company, Captain Gelsthorpe was awarded the D.S.O., and two Officers the Military Cross. Two D.C.M.'s and five Military Medals were also awarded to this Company.

In the 19th Machine Gun Company, Lieutenant G. Harrison was awarded the Military Cross, Sergeant H. Bull the D.C.M., and Sergeant Rose and Lance-Corporal Clark the Military Medal.

In the 98th Machine Gun Company, Lieutenant Adams was awarded the Military Cross, Corporal Dean, Lance-Corporal Boast and Private Campbell the Military Medal, and in the 100th Machine Gun Company, Sergeant Heanley was awarded the D.C.M., and Corporal Gates, Corporal Hudson, Lance-Corporal Samuels, D.C.M., Private Barrass and Private Joyce were awarded the Military Medal.

During this action, so heavy was the German counter-battery bombardment, that despite the fact that we had undoubtedly a preponderance of artillery, the guns of all calibres being locked almost wheel to wheel along the whole front, and in many lines, our artillery could appreciably be felt to grow weaker and weaker.

Except for a lull of about twenty minutes the intensity of the bombardment never lessened during the whole of the 25th and the night of the 25th-26th. At 9 p.m. orders were received from the higher command, that although the Division had by this time suffered about 5,000 casualties, the original attack would be carried out according to plan on the morning of the 26th. During the night of the 25th-26th, 700,000 rounds of ammunition were got up by the pack train of the D.A.C. to replenish the dumps at our battery positions, and such reliefs of gunners as were possible were carried out. Captain Lewthwaite arrived to take over command of the 19th Machine Gun Company, replacing Captain Falkner who had been wounded on the 20th. No more severe trial of Machine Gunners has probably ever been made. Everything was ready by zero on the 26th. The attack swept

forward along the whole 33rd Divisional front with extreme bitterness. Very few prisoners were taken. Enormous numbers of the enemy were found dead, and the Ninety-third and Middlesex, who were cut off, were found to have maintained their original position of the 25th intact, having endured not only the enemy attack, but our own bombardment. The feat of the 33rd Division in thus capturing the whole of its objective after having endured a bombardment and counter-attack of such intensity on the day preceding, is best described in a telegram sent by Field-Marshal Sir Douglas Haig and General Sir H. Plumer, hereunder :—

“ From the Field-Marshal Commanding-in-Chief, British Armies in France.  
“ To General Sir H. C. O. Plumer, Commanding 2nd Army.  
“ G.H.Q., 27th September, 1917.

“ The ground gained by the 2nd Army yesterday, under your  
“ Command, and the heavy losses inflicted on the enemy in the course  
“ of the day, constitute a complete defeat of the German forces opposed  
“ to you. Please convey to all Corps and Divisions engaged my  
“ heartiest congratulations, and especially to the 33rd Division, whose  
“ successful attack, following a day of hard fighting, is deserving of all  
“ praise.”

“ From Xth Corps.  
“ To 33rd Division.  
“ G.G. 131. 26th September, 1917.

“ Following received from General Plumer: Please accept my  
“ congratulations on success of to-day's operations, and convey them to  
“ the troops engaged. The 33rd Division have done fine work under  
“ extraordinarily difficult circumstances, and the 39th Division have  
“ carried out their task most successfully. The Corps Commander adds  
“ his own congratulations.”

In circulating the above messages I wish to congratulate all Officers, non-commissioned Officers and Men of the Division on having gained by their fine fighting qualities, such marks of appreciation from the Commander-in-Chief, and from the Army and Corps Commanders.

Captured enemy documents show what efforts the enemy made on the 25th September, 1917, against the front held by the Division between the Ypres–Menin Road and the Southern Edge of the Polygon Wood.





AEROPLANE PHOTOGRAPH OF THE YPRES—  
MENIN ROAD BATTLEFIELD, NEAR POLYGON  
WOOD.



BRITISH TANK, DERELICT IN INVERNESS  
COPSE, MENIN ROAD





THE MULE TRACK AT ZONNEBEEK.



MAJOR A. LOMAX, M.C., COMMANDING "B" COMPANY AT A CAMOUFLAGED M.G. BATTERY POSITION ON ABRAHAM HEIGHTS.



PASSCHENDAELE CHURCH FROM BELLEVUE SPUR, LOOKING ACROSS THE RAVEBEEK.



AUGUSTUS WOOD.



I wish this Order to be read on parade to all ranks of the Division, as a mark of my appreciation of their gallant conduct in the past, and as a proof of my confidence in their being able to maintain their high reputation in the future.

(Signed) P. WOOD,  
Major-General Commanding 33rd Division.

September 29th, 1917.

An aeroplane photograph of the battlefield gives some idea of the difficulties experienced by our troops, no less than of the enormous number of shells used in the attack. Not a square yard of ground existed which was not pock-marked with craters, the photograph, taken at a height of 3,000 feet, resembling rather some hideous disease than a once beautiful wooded countryside.

Although it had only been in action for two days, the Division had incurred over 6,000 casualties, and had been through probably its worst ordeal in battle. It was withdrawn to the Bailleul-Ravelsburg Area to rest for a few days, and then was put into a comparatively quiet, though uncomfortable, part of the line East of the Messines Ridge to re-organize.

As a result of the satisfaction given to the Divisional Commander, and the increased comfort and efficiency obtained within the Companies, the Divisional Commander decided to "Brigade" the four Machine Gun Companies under the D.M.G.O. This was the first step towards the formation of a Battalion. It was at this time that the whole controversy concerning the command and administration of Machine Gun Companies was raised by G.H.Q. The Major-General called for a report from the D.M.G.O., and a meeting was held by the four Machine Gun Companies and the D.M.G.O. to thrash the matter out. The conservatism of some of the Machine Gun Company Commanders may be imagined when it took Major Hutchison from 6 p.m. one evening until 2 a.m. the following morning to persuade them that the Battalion system was undoubtedly the best. The Major-General, at any rate, appreciated the fact, and when the Division was moved from the Messines Sector to Ypres and Passchendaele, he delegated to the D.M.G.O. full powers of command and administration. An Acting Adjutant, Lieutenant G. Harrison, M.C., of the 19th Machine Gun Company, and an acting Quartermaster, Lieutenant Blowey of the 248th Machine Gun Company, were appointed, and the four Machine Gun Companies very early in November, 1917, were practically reformed on the present Battalion basis.

The 33rd Division relieved the 4th Canadian Division in the Passchendaele Sector on the 16th November.

Before leaving Messines, Captain Andrew relieved Captain Cartwright in command of the 100th Machine Gun Company, and Captain Wheeler was sent to replace Captain J. R. Bellerby, M.C., who had been wounded.

The winter experiences of the 33rd Division, which had gone from worse to worse, undoubtedly culminated in unpleasantness and horror during its tours in the Passchendaele Salient.

When it is remembered that to reach the gun positions it was necessary to traverse a single duck track for two and a half hours; and then plunge into a slough of filthy shell holes amongst which hundreds of unburied dead grinned from amongst miles of tangled wire and stunted trees; that the gun teams carrying complete rations for the period were lost to sight in a sea of mud for four days without relief; that violent, harassing fire, requiring thousands of rounds, which had to be carried daily to the guns, was demanded; that it was impossible to get even pack animals, let alone limbers, within two miles of the guns; that the Salient was only 1,000 yards across and extended to a depth of about 3,000 yards, and that the whole area was overlooked by the enemy and swept by shell fire and gas of all descriptions, continuously, particularly on the single duck track, both during the day and during the night; some idea of what the Machine Gunners underwent, both physically and mentally, may be imagined. The casualties from shell fire, gas and exposure, sustained by the Division were very considerable.

None will ever forget that energetic and truly amazing Corps Commander, Lieutenant-General Sir A. Hunter Weston, K.C.B., popularly known as "Hunter Bunter." Many good tales are told of his versatility and quixotism. How he stood on top of a pill-box under shell fire and lectured to the universe—Staff Officers, Fatigue Men, Commanding Officers, Batmen, Subalterns and Drivers, with their pack animals, were all gathered into his audience by his stentorian voice. How he would test our Box Respirator Drill efficiency by poking his head into dug-outs and shouting "Gas"; and watching through his monocle with intense amusement our struggles to be alert. His interest in our domestic arrangements, cleanliness of the Brigadier's frying pan, for which, if found correct, he always shook hands with the cook and congratulated him; his war upon flies; and his schemes for sanitation, and for the salvage of every known thing, with huge notice boards erected to remind us of our duty in these respects in the front line; "Cleanliness comes next to Godliness"; "What have you salvaged to-day?" and "Remember you will have to pay for the war," to which someone facetiously remarked, "Save my skin and you can tax me up to the eyes."



AEROPLANE PHOTOGRAPHS OF A BRITISH TRENCH AND POSTS NEAR PASSCHENDAELE CHURCH. THE TOPS OF THE SOLDIERS' HELMETS CAN BE SEEN IN THE TRENCHES. THE PHOTOGRAPH SHOWS WELL THE SHELL-PITTED AND WATER-LOGGED STATE OF THE COUNTRYSIDE



## CHAPTER V.

### PASSCHENDAELE—REORGANIZATION OF THE DIVISION—FORMATION OF THE 33RD BATTALION MACHINE GUN CORPS.

When the Division took over the line, two Machine Gun Companies were disposed in the front system, one Machine Gun Company in support at Tyne Cotts, and one in reserve at Potijze, where also the Transport Lines were established. From this date, the Machine Gun Companies were definitely disassociated from the Brigades with which they had always previously worked; and Machine Gun reliefs were carried out under the orders of the D.M.G.O. without regard to the reliefs of the Infantry Brigades in the line. Early in December several minor operations were undertaken by the Division in conjunction with attacks on a large scale by the Second Army, in an attempt to finally take the whole of the Passchendaele-Westroosbeke Ridge. Owing to the impassable state of the ground, these attacks proved to be nothing but costly failures. The 33rd Division suffered very heavily, particularly as the result of gas shells. So extensively did the Germans now employ both Blue and Yellow Cross Gas shells that such dug-outs and pill-boxes as existed were made untenable in a very few hours, despite every precaution.

Several acts of marked heroism were carried out by the Machine Gunners during this period. Lance-Corporal St. Ledger, of the 19th Machine Gun Company, being awarded the Military Medal for digging out his gun team, which had been buried by shell fire, and carrying a badly wounded Officer, Lieutenant Balshaw, in pitch darkness, on his back a distance of a mile and half to the Aid Post, through a heavy barrage across almost impassable ground; whilst a complete gun team, Lance-Corporal Court, Privates Morris and Lewis, were all awarded a similar decoration for marked gallantry during a very heavy bombardment and counter-attack. Sergeants Ralph and Scott, and Lance-Corporal Shaw, of the 248th Machine Gun Company, were similarly awarded the Military Medal for most marked gallantry and devotion to duty. A really ideal Machine Gun defence scheme was evolved

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in this Sector, with three perfect systems of lines of guns giving cross fire and mutually supporting. This was only done by most careful compass reconnaissance at night, and close study of every fold of the ground. There was scarcely a new shell hole which was not discovered. Machine Gunners were most energetically supported and assisted by both Lieutenant-Colonel E. C. Gepp, D.S.O., and Major H. Denison Pender, D.S.O., M.C., of the Divisional Staff.

The Division was relieved after its first tour in this Sector on the 12th December. During the night of relief, a very serious fire occurred in the Ramparts, Ypres, which unfortunately destroyed all the records and War Diaries of the Machine Gun Companies.

The Division was relieved by the 50th Division and moved back to the Steenvoorde Area for Christmas. Christmas went with unusual éclat and gaiety in a heavy snowfall, with concerts, dinners and many football matches.

There was no man in the Division who was not more than pleased to see its old Commander return once more, Major-General R. J. Pinney, C.B., relieving General Wood, C.B., D.S.O.

In the first week of January, the Division was moved back into its old Sector at Passchendaele. The Sector was already considerably more pleasant. Communications both for Infantry and Transport had made rapid strides, and many of the old pill-boxes had been made habitable.

The policy of imagining that all a Machine Gunner required both for defence and for protection against the weather was a glorified Coote's Nest, now fell into abeyance, and for the most part the Machine Gun teams were well posted in pill-boxes. The best remembered and popular of these were probably Isis, Graf Farm, Heine House, Thames, Tyne Cott, Itchy, Joy, Dan House, Jutland. On many occasions, the front of the 33rd Division was raided by the Germans, particularly from the Gasometers, and opposite the Railway from the direction of the Passchendaele Station. Again and again, the Machine Gun Companies were thanked by the Brigadiers for their promptitude in bringing down the S.O.S. Barrage, both direct and indirect. This was particularly so on the occasion of a raid upon the posts of the 1st Queen's, in which the enemy not only failed to reach the posts, but left at least fifteen dead lying out in front of the wire, in the Machine Gun Barrage Line; and during a similar raid upon the Cameronians opposite Passchendaele Church. Several successful raids, also, were carried out by our troops, which were admirably supported by direct and indirect Machine Gun fire. There is no doubt whatever, that by this time the Infantry had the greatest confidence in direct Machine Gun fire by night, and in the barrage; and invariably it was asked for.





98th Bde. Ant. Batt  
Boche Prisoner 15/7/1918  
FRICOURT.

A TYPICAL HUN. (From a Sketch by Lt.-Col.  
G. S. Hutchison, D.S.O., M.C.)

[Printed by Waterlow Bros. & Layton, Limited.]



## PASSCHENDAELE

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During this tour the front of the 33rd Division was considerably lengthened to embrace not only Passchendaele Church inclusive, but the Broodseinde cross-roads and the whole of the Keerslahoek Ridge. This was the result of the reduction of each Brigade from the strength of four Battalions to that of three. In the 33rd Division the following Battalions disappeared :—

- 20th Battalion Royal Fusiliers.
- 4th Battalion Suffolk Regiment.
- 2nd Battalion Royal Welsh Fusiliers (which went to the Welsh Division).

The Division was reconstituted as under :—

### 19th Brigade—

- 1st Battalion Queen's (Royal West Surrey) Regiment.
- 1st Battalion The Cameronians (Scottish Rifles).
- 5th-6th Battalion Scottish Rifles.

### 98th Brigade—

- 4th Battalion King's (Liverpool) Regiment.
- 2nd Battalion Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders.
- 1st Battalion Middlesex Regiment.

### 100th Brigade—

- 2nd Battalion Worcestershire Regiment.
- 9th Battalion Highland Light Infantry (Glasgow Highlanders).
- 16th Battalion King's Royal Rifle Corps.

Owing to the width of the new front and the paucity of the Infantry, it was again necessary to have a very large number of Machine Guns in the line. The guns of the 33rd Division were therefore redistributed with three Companies in the line and one Company in rest at Potijze.

The outstanding feature of this tour was the activity of those who, as a weekly amusement, sometimes even as a daily hobby, revise Divisional defence schemes. It probably never occurred to these gentlemen that the dragging of a Vickers Gun through a "Slough of Despond," and the construction of a machine gun position is an almost superhuman feat if carried out once a month, but if carried out more frequently than is really necessary, may break the hearts of the Gunners.

Early in February the Division was relieved in the line by the 50th Division again, and was withdrawn into G.H.Q. Reserve in the Tilques

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Training Area ; the Machine Gun Companies, without regard to which Brigade they belonged to, being concentrated around Westbecourt.

On the 13th February, an order was issued that both G.H.Q. and the War Office had approved of the formation of Machine Gun Battalions, and that reorganization would be commenced forthwith. It had been intimated that the Battalion was to consist of three Companies of twenty guns each. The 98th Company was therefore divided up between the 19th, 100th and 248th Companies ; and in the formation of experts and specialists for the Headquarters of the Battalion. A fortnight following this change, a New Provisional War Establishment was received, on the basis of four Companies of sixteen guns each. In order to get the fourth Company from the three Companies already constituted, and to give the Battalion a new spirit of independence, one Section was taken from each of the three Companies and the fourth Company completed from drafts. The constitution of the Battalion was therefore—

“ A ” Company formed on the shell of the 19th Company ; “ B ” Company bearing a little resemblance to the old 100th Company ; “ C ” Company being the relics of the 248th Company ; “ D ” Company being reconstituted from the 98th and the three other old Companies.

The appointments made in the Battalion were as under :—

Commanding Officer	..	Lieut.-Col. G. S. Hutchison, M.C.
Second in Command	..	Major W. C. Andrew (100th Company).
Adjutant .. ..	..	Captain G. Harrison M.C. (19th Company).
Transport Officer ..	..	Lieutenant J. McQueen (19th Company).
Acting Quartermaster	..	2nd Lieutenant A. Huskisson (100th Company).
R.S.M. .. ..	..	C.S.M. A. Kiddie, D.C.M. (19th Company).
R.Q.M.S. .. ..	..	C.S.M. A. Scott (98th Company).
Orderly Room Sergeant	..	Lance-Corpl. J. H. Thompson (100th and 248th Companies).
Pioneer Sergeant ..	..	Lance-Corpl. C. Sparrow (248th Company).
Provost Sergeant ..	..	Sgt. R. Connell (19th Company).
O.C., “ A ” Company	..	Major W. Lewthwaite, M.C.
Second in Command	..	Captain Hanson.
O.C., “ B ” Company	..	Major A. Lomax.
Second in Command	..	Captain Lockhart
O.C., “ C ” Company	..	Major Judson.
Second in Command	..	Captain Wilson, M.C.
O.C., “ D ” Company	..	Major R. Atherton.
Second in Command	..	Captain Grant.



ZONNEBEEK CHURCH AND BROODSEINDE RIDGE.



"TYNE COTTS" PILLBOX MAJOR JUDSON, CAPT. WILSON, M.C., CAPT. CROSS, M.C., AND PTE KANE, M.M.



"IMMEDIATE ACTION." FIRING AT HOSTILE AIRCRAFT 6.30 A.M. "TYNE COTTS."



SIGHTING M.G. POSITIONS. PASSCHENDAELE. RESECTION BY COMPASS, AND RANGE-FINDING.









The first steps taken were the concentration of the Transport under the Transport Officer and the four Transport Sergeants, of whom Sergeant H. Reeve, from the 98th Company, was appointed Local Transport Sergeant Major.

Secondly, the formation of a Scouts Section of twenty-five selected, specially trained, young soldiers to be qualified as Range Takers and Scouts, in the fullest sense of the word, in charge of the following N.C.O.'s: Lance-Sergeant G. St. Ledger, M.M., Sergeant Hosh, Lance-Corporal Le May, Lance-Corporal Milthorpe; and thirdly, the concentration of all Company Artificers, Pioneers, Tailors and Bootmakers, to form a Pioneer Section and Workshops for the Battalion. These were placed under the charge of Sergeant Sparrow, with Lance-Corporal Daintith (248th Company) in charge of the Artificers, Lance-Corporal Lockett in charge of the Tailors, and Lance-Corporal O'Reilly in charge of the Bootmakers.

With a Battalion considerably over the strength of an Infantry Battalion, and with so large a transport, and being a "Specialist Corps," it was decided immediately that the Orderly Room Staff should consist of the picked brains of the Battalion. Lance-Corporal J. H. Thompson, who had acted nominally as Clerk to the Divisional Machine Gun Officer, but actually as the Machine Gun Corps "Pooh-Ba" in the Division, was appointed Orderly Room Sergeant with Lance-Corporal L. G. Saxton (19th Company) as his lieutenant; and Lance-Corporal H. Bryden, who had since the Menin Road Battle acted as Draughtsman, now appointed as such.

It will be seen in the subsequent record of the Battalion how wise and justified were these appointments and formations.

The orders for the four Companies' formation actually came through when the Battalion was on the line of march from Westbecourt to Ypres, at St. Martin au Laert, where it had halted to billet for the night. Within two hours the change had taken place, and it is to the very great credit of all concerned, particularly the Orderly Room Staff, that on the following morning the Battalion, instead of as three Companies, moved off as four equal Companies with a complete chain of command.

Apart from the fact that the four Machine Gun Companies of the 33rd Division had been tactically commanded and largely administered as a Battalion since November, 1917, there is no doubt whatever that it was the first Battalion formed; for as noted, within two hours of the receipt of the order, the Battalion was on the march into action with every appointment filled, and its War Establishment complete: an admirable beginning to a Battalion in which promptitude of action has played a prominent part.

Whilst in the three Company formation, it was decided to hold a

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demonstration to all Units in the Division of Machine Gun Barrage fire, with thirty-two guns. This was most admirably carried out under the inspection of Major-General Pinney and his Staff, a number of Infantry Battalion Commanders and Brigadier-General Stewart, C.R.A., who not only had always given us many excellent "tips," but on this occasion showed his confidence in our fire by walking right into the cone of fire. Fire direction was carried out by visual signalling and by telephone, and a formal O.P. was used for the first time.

The Battalion took over the line again from the 50th Division early in March. This tour in the line was one of very great energy, and of continuous training. Not only in the line, but out of it, energetic steps were taken to achieve a very high standard in all things. When the rear echelons and reserve Companies marched into the area allotted at Potijze, the limbers were over the axles in mud, and the camp consisted of a few bedraggled tents, filthy shanties and dirty dug-outs. Hard work by the Pioneers transformed this Arab encampment into a "White City," with pleasantly furnished and decorated huts, an admirable system of offices and stores, recreation rooms, messes, and standard sandbagged huts, with an "In and Out" metalled drive neatly railed off with white palings, and dry and comfortable horse lines. The Camp was actually known as "Camp Swank." A large ground plan of the Passchendaele-Broodseinde defences was also laid out with a raised platform upon which spectators might stand and obtain a bird's-eye view of all the ground and its defences in miniature. The Plan was used frequently for the instruction of all ranks in the principles of Machine Gun tactics and fire; and there is no doubt that the study of this Plan, combined with practical study upon the ground afterwards, when holding the line, was mainly instrumental in enabling the Battalion to obtain a remarkable high standard of efficiency, particularly amongst its Officers and N.C.O.'s. It is the truth that there was no man in the Battalion who did not clearly understand the function of the Gun in defence, and the reason of its position in any particular place. Similarly, also, there was no man who could not use the prismatic compass or read a map with complete understanding. Further, and chiefly, every man fully understood the close relation and co-operation of the Machine Gunner with the Infantry with whom he was working.

In this final tour of the Division in the Passchendaele and Broodseinde Sector, although the work was arduous owing to the construction of many new positions in anticipation of a large German offensive, which was by now fully expected, the period was, with the exception of energetic patrolling and raids, quiet. Except for the preponderance of aerial reconnaissance,



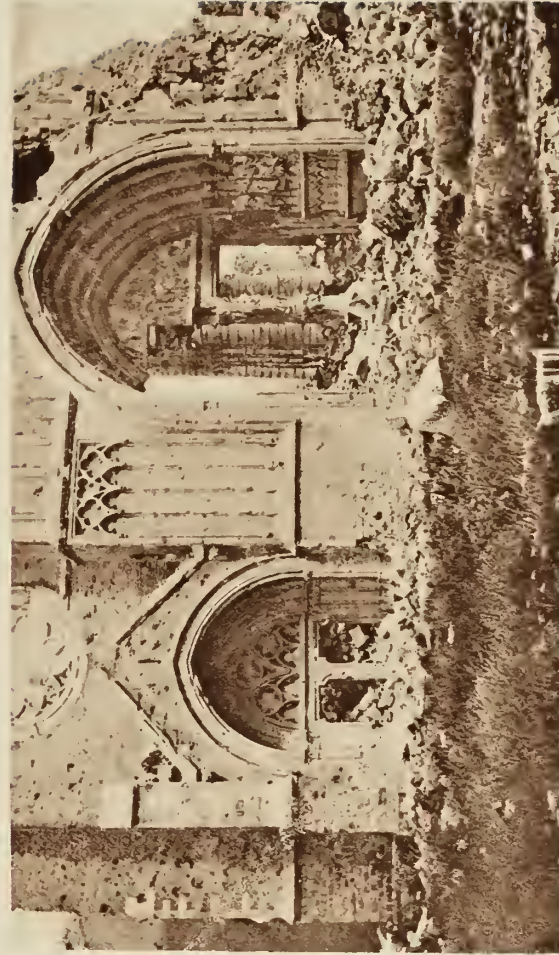
A GUN TEAM AT GRAF FARM, PASSCHENDAELE.



VIEW OF THE CAMP, POTIJZE, SHOWING THE GROUND PLAN OF THE FORWARD DEFENCES.



THE CATHEDRAL, YPRES (WEST DOOR).



THE CATHEDRAL, YPRES.



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night bombing and violent "shell storms" very little activity was shown by the enemy. Everyone, however, felt that this was only the lull before the storm. On March the 29th the storm broke, not on our front but on that of the 5th Army. No sooner had the storm broken than the 33rd Division was hurriedly withdrawn from the line and relieved by the 49th Division. Before the relief had taken place, however, "C" Company, to which had recently been appointed Major Judson in Command, was moved with the 19th Brigade to the Arras area at Lattre St. Quentin. The rest of the Battalion was moved by 'bus and train to Lattre St. Quentin three days later, and the whole Battalion was concentrated in this area. Very little news filtered through except that the enemy had made a large number of attacks on a stupendous scale; and rolling up the 4th and 5th Armies had almost broken our line, and that of the French; and was advancing rapidly on the road to Paris, having captured in a few days tens of thousands of prisoners and hundreds of guns, and the whole of the Somme and Arras battlefields; establishing his line in territory which he had not previously occupied except in the early days of 1914.

## CHAPTER VI.

METEREN—NEUVE EGLISE. 12TH TO 20TH APRIL, 1918.

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### ORDER OF BATTLE.

Divisional Commander		Major-General R. J. Pinney, C.B.
G.S.O. 1.	.. ..	Lieut.-Colonel E. C. Gepp, D.S.O., D.C.L.I.
G.S.O. 2	.. ..	Lieut.-Colonel H. C. Sparling, D.S.O., Quebec Regt.
G.S.O. 3	.. ..	Captain A. M. Bankier, M.C., A. & S. Highlanders.
A.A. and Q.M.G.	..	Lieut.-Colonel J. G. Ramsay, D.S.O., Cameron Hrs.
19TH INFANTRY BRIGADE.		
Commander	..	Brig.-General C. R. G. Mayne, D.S.O.
Brigade Major	..	Captain C. la T. Turner-Jones, M.C., R.E.
98TH INFANTRY BRIGADE.		
Commander	..	Brig.-General J. D. Heriot-Maitland, C.M.G., D.S.O.
Brigade Major	..	Captain F. C. V. D. Caillard, M.C., Som. L.I.
100TH INFANTRY BRIGADE.		
Commander	..	Brig.-General A. W. F. Baird, C.M.G., D.S.O.
Brigade Major	..	Captain J. I. Muirhead, M.C., K.O.Y.L.I.
33RD BATTALION MACHINE GUN CORPS.		
C.O.	.. ..	Lieut.-Colonel G. S. Hutchison, M.C.
Second in Command		Major W. Andrew.
Adjutant	.. ..	Captain G. Harrison, M.C.
Intelligence Officer		2nd Lieutenant J. D. McLaren.
Medical Officer	..	Lieutenant H. Cook (U.S.A.).
Transport Officer	..	Lieutenant J. McQueen.



BDE.-GENL. C. R. G. MAYNE, D.S.O.,  
COMMANDING 19TH INFANTRY BRIGADE (JULY,  
1916 FEBRUARY, 1919.)





*METEREN—NEUVE EGLISE*

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“ A ” COMPANY.

O.C. .. .. Major W. Lewthwaite, M.C.  
Second in Command Captain J. H. Hanson.  
Section Officers .. 2nd Lieutenant R. W. Kallend.  
2nd Lieutenant J. M. McKenzie.  
2nd Lieutenant R. H. Goode.  
2nd Lieutenant P. Barker.  
2nd Lieutenant F. G. Godwin.  
2nd Lieutenant W. A. Harris.

“ B ” COMPANY.

O.C. .. .. Major A. Lomax.  
Second in Command Captain W. O. Lockhart.  
Section Officers .. Lieutenant C. S. Hedgeland.  
Lieutenant A. M. Dobson.  
2nd Lieutenant C. L. Marshall.  
2nd Lieutenant E. C. Turner.  
2nd Lieutenant T. D. Patterson.  
Lieutenant W. E. Day.  
2nd Lieutenant F. Paley.

“ C ” COMPANY.

O.C. .. .. Major H. Judson.  
Second in Command Captain F. Moore.  
Section Officers .. 2nd Lieutenant W. B. Cockbain.  
2nd Lieutenant W. Cross.  
2nd Lieutenant H. Watts.  
2nd Lieutenant A. M. Heath.  
2nd Lieutenant J. F. Mawson.

“ D ” COMPANY.

O.C. .. .. Major R. R. Atherton.  
Second in Command Captain F. G. Grant.  
Section Officers .. Lieutenant C. E. Pridham.  
2nd Lieutenant R. Nicholl.  
2nd Lieutenant W. Neill.  
Lieutenant N. V. Stephens.  
2nd Lieutenant J. S. Keith.  
Lieutenant F. W. Brickell.  
2nd Lieutenant C. R. Arnott.  
2nd Lieutenant W. J. Blowey.  
Acting Q.M. .. 2nd Lieutenant A. Huskisson, M.C.

## *METEREN—NEUVE EGLISE*

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Whilst in its concentration area behind Arras, two days of most valuable training were obtained in the use of ground; concealment of approach; use of Transport for ammunition supply; use of mounted orderlies; fire direction and control; mobility; avoidance of large dumps, except in limbers or on the backs of pack animals.

The great success of this Battalion in action between the 12th and 18th April could not have been achieved without this training. Undoubtedly casualties would have been far heavier.

A note should be made that the greatest care had been taken to insist on a personal relation between Officers, N.C.O.'s and Men. Games and recreation of all kinds had been carefully fostered. The high fighting qualities displayed by all ranks owed much to the splendid spirit of confidence and mutual trust animating the Battalion.

The experiences gained by this Division in the operations around Meteren and Bailleul leave no shadow of doubt that the Machine Gun Battalion organization was adopted only just in time. From our previous experiences, the task performed by the Machine Guns could not possibly have been done under the old organization. The Commanding Officer reported that the enemy could not have been held except by Machine Guns trained and organized as a Battalion, under one control and with one centralised source of ammunition supply; feeding with reserve personnel; and replacement of damaged equipment.

Without doubt, also, work would have been duplicated. The gaps created in the Infantry, owing to casualties, and to attacks by the enemy which from time to time drew part of the line, a thin line, to concentrate to meet them, could not have been filled except ordered by an Officer closely in touch with the whole situation and in the closest liaison with the Brigadiers and Battalion Commanders conducting the operations.

### OPERATIONS BETWEEN 12TH AND 18TH APRIL, 1918.

As noted, the Battalion was concentrated in the Arras area on the 8th April, 1918. At 7 p.m. on 10th instant, orders were received that the Division should proceed forthwith by tactical trains to the Caestre area.

Personnel of Machine Gun Companies with guns, tripods and eight belt boxes proceeded by train with the Brigade groups to which they were affiliated for operations, as under:—

Battalion Headquarters and "A" and "C" Companies with 19th Infantry Brigade.

"B" Company with 100th Infantry Brigade.





CAPT. AND ADJUTANT G. HARRISON, M.C.  
AND BAR.



MAJOR W. ANDREW, D.S.O., M.C., SECOND  
IN COMMAND.

PERSPECTIVE SKETCH PLAN  
OF THE BATTLEFIELD AT  
METEREN

SKETCH PLAN OF THE METEREN OPERATIONS  
BATTLEFIELD, APRIL, 1918.





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“ D ” Company with 98th Infantry Brigade.

The Transport and all other material proceeding by route march.

By 5 p.m. on the 11th instant, the three groups were detrained at Caestre and were concentrated, bivouacking in fields, as under :—

19th Brigade Group—

Battalion Headquarters, “ A ” and “ C ” Companies..Meteren Area.

100th Brigade Group.

“ B ” Company .. .. .Ravelsburg.

98th Brigade Group.

“ D ” Company .. .. .Strazeele.

From this time forward the action of the Battalion in the operations following is necessarily divided into two separate diaries—

- (1) Operations carried out by “ A,” “ C,” and “ D ” Companies, under Battalion Headquarters, with 19th and 98th Infantry Brigades under 33rd Division.
- (2) Operations carried out by “ B ” Company with 100th Infantry Brigade under 25th Division.

### OPERATIONS CARRIED OUT BY THE BATTALION (LESS “ B ” COMPANY) SOUTH AND EAST OF METEREN.

Lieutenant-Colonel Hutchison visited the General Staff of the 33rd Division at 10 p.m. on 11th April. The situation, particularly in the South, was most obscure. It was known only that the enemy had captured both Merville and Estaires, some seven miles South of Meteren. It was supposed, though not known, that his advance had been arrested in this area. As a measure of safety, full military precautions were ordered ; and in conjunction with troops of the 19th Infantry Brigade, outposts were at once put out covering the approaches East and South of Meteren.

At 10.30 on the morning of the 12th, Lieutenant-Colonel Hutchison received orders from the General Staff to have a reconnaissance made in the vicinity.

At 10.45 a.m., three cyclist patrols from the Scouts were ordered to proceed ; and having located the enemy, to report to Battalion Headquarters,

## METEREN—NEUVE EGLISE

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established at a farmhouse about one mile South of Meteren. Each patrol consisted of an N.C.O. and four men as under :—

No. 1 Patrol proceeding *via* Clapbanck (Corporal Milthorpe).

No. 2 Patrol proceeding *via* Oultersteene (Sergeant St. Ledger, M.M.).

No. 3 Patrol proceeding *via* Strazeele and Merris (Corporal Bawn).

Nos. 2 and 3 Patrols were ordered to wait at Vieux Berquin at  
11.30 a.m.

The Commanding Officer, with 2nd Lieutenant McLaren, the Intelligence Officer, proceeding in advance, reconnoitred due South of Meteren, the Windmill Ridge and to Oostersteene. Here large numbers of both wounded and unwounded men were found to be in full retreat Northwards and Westwards. Lieutenant-Colonel Hutchison pushed on with No. 2 Patrol about half a mile South of Oostersteene, where our rear guards of the 31st Division, particularly from one Battalion, were found to be in precipitate retreat without Officers and with orders to retire.

The enemy was observed about 600 yards distant in groups pushing forward under covering fire. On more than two occasions he was seen deliberately to shoot down at short range women flying from their flaming homesteads.

The Infantry were rallied and lined out on a 500 yards front facing South, South of the Village, full use being made of buildings and ditches. Lieutenant-Colonel Hutchison placed 2nd Lieutenant McLaren in command, and disposed the rest of the patrol (under Sergeant St. Ledger, M.M., and Corporal Bawn) to rally the Infantry and organize the locality for defence, he himself bicycling for assistance. In twenty minutes he had reached Divisional Headquarters in Meteren, having dumped his bicycle and commandeered a Ford ambulance, and reported direct to G.O.C., suggesting that guns should be rushed up to fill the breach and Infantry sent as soon as possible.

A motor lorry, part of an A.S.C. column, was asked for. The Officer in charge of the Column refused to give it, although the urgency of the case was explained to him, and it was empty. Lieutenant-Colonel Hutchison therefore, put the Motor Transport Officer quietly to sleep with a right hook and commandeered the lorry, and took it to Battalion Headquarters. It was driven by Driver Sharples of the A.S.C., who thoroughly entered into this rather dramatic joke. In a few minutes it was loaded with eight guns and material, and crowded with gun teams. Orders were given to establish Battalion Headquarters at the Moulin de Hoegenmacker, and Signallers were sent forward.





THREE OF THE SCOUTS: SGT. MANTKIN, M.M.;  
SGT. ST. LEDGER, D.C.M., M.M., CROIX DE  
GUERRE; SGT. TAYLOR, M.M.



33RD BATTN. M.G.C. CAMP, POTIJZE.



SCOUTS SECTION.



Two hundred yards South of the Mill, the lorry was halted by 2nd Lieutenant McLaren and the Scouts, who, having fought in close combat with the enemy with rifles, had been forced to retire to the Windmill Ridge. The Infantry, in complete disorder, and often led on by their Officers, were retiring on to Meteren.

Between 10.30 and 11.30 a.m. the advance of the enemy was carried out with astonishing rapidity. Pressing particularly from the East, apparently trying to isolate Meteren from the troops who were supposed to be defending its Southern approaches, he even succeeded in pushing forward two light guns North of the Windmill Crest, covering a distance of about a mile and a half in less than forty minutes.

His advance from the South towards Meteren was very rapid. Elements of the Division which had been rallied by the Scouts under 2nd Lieutenant McLaren evaporated West and North before the enemy advance, which was now only checked by the resolution of the Scouts. Both Sergeant St. Ledger and Corporal Bawn, with Private Busby in particular, showing extraordinary heroism, ordered the defence with astonishing coolness and initiative, ably supported by the Scouts and a very few stout-hearted stragglers.

The excursion of the motor lorry came to an abrupt end when it was halted by the last of our advance guards under the Intelligence Officer. It came immediately under Machine Gun and Rifle fire. The order "Action Front" was given, and in a very few minutes eight guns were disposed on the Northern slopes of the Windmill Hill Crest, covering, in particular, the Southern and South-easterly approaches to Meteren and the Meteren Becque. Half "A" Company having been taken into action under Major Lewthwaite, and disposed in position by the Adjutant, the lorry returned to its base to collect half "C" Company, under Major Judson.

This incident was probably the most thrilling in which the Machine Gunners of the Division ever took part. The rapidity of action; the extraordinary situation; the perfect discipline and drill; the setting of untouched farmhouses, copses and quietly grazing cattle; the flying civilians and retiring Infantry behind; the magnificent targets obtained; and the complete grip of the situation by, and determination of, Machine Gun Commanders. This action, and the subsequent operations of the Battalion, undoubtedly will take the highest place for all time in the history of the Machine Gun Corps, and are an epic of the tenacity and grit of the British soldier with his back to the wall fighting against great odds.

A Report Centre and Advanced Battalion Headquarters was established at the Cross Roads about 300 yards North of the Hoegenmacker Windmill. From this position, Signallers, without equipment, but with handkerchiefs on sticks, were posted in communication with Battalion Headquarters.

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At 12 noon half "C" Company was brought up by lorry and disposed facing South, covering a gap of about a mile and a half South of the Meteren Becque towards Merris.

Half "A" Company was already in outpost positions, and these positions provided depth for the left of our defence. The other half of "C" Company was then brought up by road, and disposed in depth behind the front occupied by the eight forward guns. About two or three full Companies of stragglers had now been collected in the vicinity of Moelenacher by Lieutenant-Colonel Hutchison, the Adjutant and the Intelligence Officer. These men, under their own Officers, were then extended into two lines covering a front of about a mile and a half; and were ordered to retake the whole of the Hoegenmacher Windmill-Merris Ridge. It was with the greatest difficulty that they could be persuaded to move forward. They were, however, it must be said, under threat, eventually got on the move; and a long line was eventually disposed amongst our guns, forming a very doubtful local protection. As an extenuating circumstance for the action of these troops, it is known that they had been more or less engaged with the enemy already for two or three days, and were disorganized and partly exhausted.

Scouts and Mounted Orderlies were used during all this period to determine the situation on the flanks. The situation was found to be satisfactory towards Merris; but East of our line, on the Bailleul-Meteren Road, it was in a most critical condition, large numbers of the enemy being seen rapidly advancing.

After the line, covering nearly three miles of front, had been held by the Machine Gun Battalion for a period of two hours with no other protection than that of about three Companies of stragglers who had been rallied, as mentioned—of the N.C.O.'s, Sergeant Flavin, M.M., in particular, rendering excellent service in this respect—the 1st Battalion Queen's (Royal West Surrey) Regiment began to come into line from the direction of Meteren, and Moelenacher. This Battalion was apparently provided with no information whatever. One Company, under Captain Avery, and another Company under Captain Carpenter, were actually disposed in the line by the C.O. and the Adjutant, and at their suggestion Captain Avery, with great gallantry, personally led his Company forward, recapturing the Windmill Hill Crest, the Windmill and the Farms around it, under the hottest fire. He organized posts about 200 yards on the Southern slopes of the Crest; and three of our guns, one from "A" Company and two from "C" Company, under 2nd Lieutenant Heath, with Sergeant Perry, were pushed forward in support of these posts.

A further reconnaissance by the C.O. and Adjutant about 2 p.m. revealed the fact that the left flank of the Queen's, which had previously been reported to be in a critical condition, was entirely open, the troops who were supposed to be in position having dwindled away. The C.O. therefore moved one gun of 2nd Lieutenant Harris's Section on the left, up to the extreme left flank of the Queen's to cover the Windmill Ridge, whilst he disposed one of the Queen's Lewis guns to guard the Bailleul-Meteren Road and fill the gap. Large bodies of the enemy could be seen concentrating about 1,500 yards South-east of Meteren. The enemy was again attempting that which he had attempted earlier in the day by Oostersteene, *i.e.*, to force a wedge from the East between Meteren and our troops covering its approaches from the South. A Reserve Section of "C" Company, under 2nd Lieutenant Watts, was therefore moved Eastwards to the high ground South-east of Meteren and about 200 yards West of the Steam Mill; and another section, under 2nd Lieutenant Cross, was thrown out to cover the right flank of the Queen's. At 7 p.m. Major Judson, commanding "C" Company, was wounded, his place being taken by Captain Moore from reserve. A very full report was then sent by the C.O. to the General Staff. The C.O. and the Adjutant, in order to find some local protection for 2nd Lieutenant Watts' Section, rallied a party, which must have consisted of at least twenty different Units, under a Cyclists Officer, and disposed them to secure the East and South-east approaches to Meteren. Troops of every formation now began to dwindle into the line, being rushed up in motor lorries by the IX. Corps. Cyclist orderlies from Corps Headquarters, cooks, batmen, pioneers, even, it was said, a platoon of Town Majors under an Area Commandant! in fact, anyone who could hold a rifle to stem the tide.

By dusk the 5th Scottish Rifles had been sent by the 19th Brigade to reinforce this front, whilst the Cameronians had been thrown in on the right of the Queen's, holding the line South of Moelenacher, and maintaining contact with the Australians towards Merris, which village was at this time still believed to be in our hands. By nightfall, therefore, the line, though extremely thin, was continuous and held.

As a matter of fact, it is doubtful if Merris was even at this time in our hands. One scout entered a Farmyard in the Village and found a foaming horse accoutred in the yard. He was held in conversation by the farmer, who alleged the horse to be his own. On leaving the house the horse was gone. No doubt this was one of an enemy patrol; finding the Village unoccupied by our troops without doubt the enemy hurried to it.

Meanwhile, the motor lorry driven by Driver Sharples had made journey after journey, often through intense shell, machine gun and rifle

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fire, bringing ammunition, spare parts, personnel, picks and shovels to Battalion Headquarters, and distributing tools round the Queen's outpost line, directed by Machine Gun Officers. During the day many targets were fired on, and, as it became more and more apparent that the enemy's concentration for attack and advance must be impeded, harassing fire was carried out with great intensity by all our guns. The fact that the Transport had not yet arrived and that our ammunition supply was limited to eight belt boxes per gun, necessitated sending into the line for belt filling every available man, including the minimum reserve, No. 5 Royal Engineers Signal Section, Cooks, Pioneers, Tailors, Officers' Batmen, Company Clerks, under Sergeant Sturch and Sergeant Sparrow. All this personnel was withdrawn at dusk and was sent up again with wire, pickets, picks, and shovels to construct a line of wire in front of the Machine Gun nests. Meanwhile, the motor lorry searched the countryside and back areas for R. E. dumps and wire. On his own initiative, Driver Sharples went to Reninghelst where the nearest available wire could be got. These supplies, in addition to that used by the Machine Gunners, were passed also to the Infantry and a defensive line and wire scheme was arranged by the C.O., in conjunction with the O.C., 1st Queen's, Lieutenant-Colonel Kemp Welch, D.S.O., M.C. The working party worked with untiring energy directed by the Second in Command, Major Andrew, and Sergeant Sparrow.

Under cover of the mist, at dawn on the 13th inst., the enemy made a heavy attack on the centre of our line held by the 1st Queen's. The centre of this Battalion gave way, and the guns of "C" Company, under 2nd Lieutenant Heath, having secured the richest targets, were rushed, 2nd Lieutenant Heath being killed. It was possible to withdraw only one gun. At great risk to himself this was done by Sergeant Perry.

The line here fell back to the line taken up by our Machine Guns on the morning of the 12th. Two counter-attacks were carried out by "A" Company of the Queen's, and the Mill passed from our hands to the hands of the enemy, and from the enemy to us, three times within one hour, after very heavy fighting, finally remaining in enemy hands. The left of the Queen's held very firm, but the centre and right were considerably shaken and began to withdraw behind the line of the guns of "C" Company on the West of Meteren Becque. Sergeant Sturch, one of the Minimum Reserve, who had been with a wiring party, here rallied some of the Queen's, whose Officers had become casualties, and re-established them in their line with great gallantry. The enemy made repeated attempts to break our line under cover of the mist during the morning of the 14th instant. With his light guns pushed well forward, he inflicted considerable casualties both on our



GSM 118

AN EVERYDAY SIGHT. ARTILLERY OBSERVATION BALLOON DESTROYED BY A HOSTILE AEROPLANE, BOTH OCCUPANTS ESCAPING BY PARACHUTE. EPEHY. 26TH SEPTEMBER, 1918. (From a Sketch by Lieut.-Col. G. S. Hutchison, D.S.O., M.C.)

(Printed by Waterlow Bros. & Layton, Limited.)





Infantry and upon our Gunners, but all his attempts to break the line were repelled by our Gunners with the heaviest losses. During this fighting, Corporal Hurd penetrated the enemy lines at the greatest personal risk, to a distance of 200 yards and brought back the gun of 2nd Lieutenant Heath, which had been abandoned during the first retirement at dawn. This he got into action.

The early afternoon of the 13th was most critical. The Transport, whose road lay by Strazeele, now being heavily shelled, had not arrived. The question of the maintenance of our line seemed to depend upon the arrival of the Transport. Repeated messages by Mounted Orderly were sent to Divisional Headquarters asking for the arrival of the fighting Limbers. At 12 noon on the 13th, the Transport Officer arrived, and in a style reminiscent of the Royal Horse Artillery at an Aldershot Field day, the fighting limbers with belt boxes, barrels and S.A.A. were galloped through a hail of shell and machine gun fire to our gun positions, depositing the ammunition and material so urgently required.

The Queen's had incurred heavy casualties. Reinforcements, however, were either in the line, or rapidly being brought up, and by the evening of the 13th the situation seemed to be quite restored. This was reported to Divisional Headquarters and to the 19th Infantry Brigade. During the night of the 13th, destructive shoots were fired at enemy positions on the Hoegenmacher Mill-Merris Ridge, and on his communications in rear. Up to this time not a single shell had been fired in support of our Infantry by the Artillery, whilst the enemy had continually bombarded our posts and communications during the 12th and 13th with Field Guns, Field Howitzers and Light Trench Mortars, which he brought up with extraordinary rapidity.

There is no doubt that had the enemy attacked in any strength between 12 noon and 5 p.m. on the 13th instant, he might have entirely broken through our line. During his attacks on the morning of the 13th instant, and even up to 12 noon, detachments of enemy cavalry were fired upon, one large detachment in particular of about 200 horsemen being decimated by the fire of the Section under 2nd Lieutenant Watts, South-east of Meteren. By the evening of the 13th instant the situation was again normal.

The night of the 13th, with the exception of intermittent shelling and machine gun fire, was quiet, and enabled more S.A.A. to be brought up and the wiring of the machine gun positions to be completed; also enabling the Infantry to redispense their positions. 2nd Lieutenant R. H. Goode was wounded on the 13th.

The 14th was probably the most critical day of these operations the Infantry, particularly the 1st Battalion Queen's Regiment, who had been

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very hotly engaged and had sustained very heavy casualties, particularly amongst the Officers, were very shaken.

At dawn on the 14th, as he had done on the 13th, the enemy launched very heavy attacks against our positions from the South-east and South of Meteren. A gap was made in the centre of the Queen's line covering the Meteren Becque; a second gap was made on the left of the 5th Scottish Rifles, covering the approach to Meteren from the East; another gap was made between the right of the Queen's and the 1st Cameronians, North-east of Merris. The enemy exploited these gains to full advantage, pushing forward light machine guns with great rapidity. In three instances the machine gun positions were being outflanked. The Second in Command, who had been out during the night of the 13th-14th organizing the ammunition supply, again and again redispersed the Infantry in position or moved guns to fill the gaps, or form a defensive flank to hinder the progress of the enemy and protect our line from his enfilade fire. In this he was assisted by the Intelligence Officer. 2nd Lieutenant Watts and 2nd Lieutenant McKenzie, in particular, showed splendid initiative, and on each occasion, appreciating the situation, so directed the fire of their guns that, although weakened by heavy casualties, our line was never penetrated to any depth. On this morning our line was definitely maintained by the splendid devotion to duty and initiative displayed by the Machine Gunners, who suffered severe losses. Most excellent targets were secured. Senior Officers, Gun Commanders and Gunners report having piled the dead enemy before their guns. Owing to the strength of the enemy bombardment and the volume of his machine gun fire; and from the fact that six Divisions were employed in the attack upon the 19th Brigade front, there is no doubt that since this attack was definitely repulsed, the heaviest losses must have been inflicted upon the enemy. During this attack 2nd Lieutenant Barker was killed and several N.C.O.'s, including Sergeants Flavin and Sturch, were wounded.

The C.O., after consultation with the 19th Infantry Brigade, urgently asked for one Section from "D" Company, which, as noted, had been attached to the 98th Brigade in Divisional Reserve. This was granted. 2nd Lieutenant Keith's Section, on arrival, was disposed to fill the gap on the left of the 5th Scottish Rifles covering the Eastern approaches to Meteren Village. On the afternoon of the 14th the General Staff ordered the 4th King's (Liverpool) Regiment and "D" Company, and Lieutenant-Colonel Hutchison, with the 33rd Battalion, less "B" Company, to come directly under the orders of Brigadier-General Mayne, Commanding the 19th Brigade.

Between 6 and 7 p.m. another determined attack was made by the enemy on the front held by the 19th Infantry Brigade. The Queen's, now

very much shaken, particularly on the right, South of Moelenacher, fell back, and the retirement of our troops became fairly general. All our guns remained in position covering this retirement, which in some cases assumed a spectacle of disorganized retreat. The O.C. Battalion and the Adjutant made a further reconnaissance of the line, and the O.C. Battalion decided that it would not be possible to maintain our machine gun positions without any Infantry protection whatever.

He therefore proceeded to 19th Infantry Brigade Headquarters to report the situation. The situation appeared most grave. No further reinforcements were available with the exception of two Platoons of the 2nd New Zealand Entrenching Battalion. Lieutenant-Colonel Hutchison was asked by General Mayne whether it was possible for any line to be held South and East of Meteren pending the arrival of further reinforcements, which could not be expected immediately. An answer having been given that this was possible, General Mayne directed Lieutenant-Colonel Hutchison to take up and dispose the two Platoons of the 2nd New Zealand Entrenching Battalion in support of his guns, and having restored a complete line, to report the situation. The line taken up was that which up to the end of the operations on the 19th instant constituted our front line; and this was now made our front line on the 14th instant. The Colonials undauntedly went forward with admirable energy and pluck. Orders were immediately issued for the withdrawal of our guns to this line and for them to be disposed in depth behind it, the withdrawal being carried out "Section by Section, and Gun by Gun, with covering fire." No finer retirement could have been carried out. In the face of great enemy opposition, and in the teeth of heavy machine gun fire at its outset, it was carried out without loss either to personnel or material. Every man and every gun was withdrawn by concealed approaches and with irreproachable discipline to the line to which the Infantry had retired in some disorder, and under perfect covering fire most ably directed by the Section Officers, noteworthy amongst whom were Lieutenant Watts, Lieutenant Harris and Lieutenant Cross.

By dawn on the 15th a very good line had been dug. The relief of "B" Company had been carried out by "D" Company. New machine gun positions had been dug and the reserve guns disposed in depth behind it. Battalion Headquarters was now moved to a more central position on the Meteren-Fletre Road, about 300 yards West of Meteren. The Infantry had been reinforced by the 11th Field Company, R.E., disposed on the right of the Queen's, and the XXII. Corps Cyclists disposed on the left of the same Battalion.

Throughout these first three days the work done by the Signallers and

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Scouts had been excellent. Splendid communication had been maintained; and the position always made clear by the energy and intelligence displayed by the Scouts.

Corporal Noblett and Lance-Corporal Bailey greatly distinguished themselves. With a "station" established on the top of the Hoegenmacher Mill, they remained with full observation of the enemy on the Southern side of the Ridge whose movements could not be seen by us; and maintained visual communication with us. Despite the fact that the Mill was under the hottest fire; and, as previously noted, itself the scene of very bitter fighting, these two men maintained their position with amazing activity. Later, after the Mill had passed finally into the hands of the enemy, they maintained their position there for two days undetected by the enemy, finally fighting their way back into our lines armed with German revolvers.

The Mounted Orderlies also did very fine work, Drivers McKay, Hicks and Taylor riding through the Infantry outposts under heavy fire time after time, carried out valuable reconnaissances, and always made it possible for gaps in our line to be immediately filled. Driver McKay was, on one occasion, cheered by men of the 1st Battalion Queen's Regiment, who rose from their trenches as he rode through their line under a hail of fire, whilst endeavouring to locate the direction of the enemy attack.

The situation during the 15th remained unaltered, the enemy confining his activity to artillery registration and periodical shell storms. An aeroplane with British markings, but almost beyond question piloted by a Boche again and again flew over our positions which were considerably shelled.

Major Lewthwaite, whose Company in particular, had borne the brunt of the battle, was relieved by Captain Hanson from the Minimum Reserve.

The C.O. and Adjutant during the morning, with a patrol of Scouts, reconnoitred our line and defences East of Meteren. This was found to be very thinly held. Positions for four guns were selected East and South-east of the Windmill, particularly covering Meteren-Bailleul Road. 2nd Lieutenant Kallend, with one Section of "A" Company, was placed in position here at 4.30 p.m. This line was called the Meteren-Moulehoek Switch.

Reserve positions were also dug giving further depth to our defences covering Fontaine Houck, the Meteren-Fletre Road and the Meteren Becque.

At 11 a.m. Battalion Headquarters received a direct hit by shell fire, inflicting casualties amongst the Scouts, and had obviously been located, a large number of shells being fired at this group of buildings. A move was therefore made to a Farmhouse 200 yards North of La Besace Farm.

The night was quiet. The 19th Brigade was relieved by 98th Brigade on the left of the line, from the right of the King's, who had relieved the



Rocquigny, (From an Oil Sketch by Lieut. Col. G. S. Hutchison, D.S.O., M.C.).

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Queen's on the night 14th-15th, up to the Steam Mill. "D" Company, under Major Atherton, relieved "C" Company.

The guns in the line, therefore, were "D" Company and one Section of "A" Company, under 2nd Lieutenant Kallend; "A" Company (less one Section) and "C" Company being in reserve.

On the early morning of the 16th, the enemy made a most determined and strong attack on our positions South-east of Meteren, our right remaining quiet. This developed chiefly against the King's whose left was overwhelmed. Both 2nd Lieutenant Kallend and 2nd Lieutenant Keith, who was wounded, with their Sections, obtained excellent targets, 2nd Lieutenant Kallend in particular showing great bravery and directing the fire of his guns with great effect.

The attack was accompanied by a very heavy bombardment, particularly of Meteren itself. By 9 a.m. the enemy had effected a very definite lodgment in the town, with his machine guns most active from the Church. 2nd Lieutenant Nichol was killed by a sniper whilst directing the fire of his section.

During this day our Artillery, which had slowly increased since the 14th, showed itself to be in some force, both 18 pounders and French 75s combining, supported by adequate heavier pieces.

French reinforcements from the 133rd Division during all this day were streaming up the roads and disposed themselves in reserve positions and in the support lines. At 5 p.m. the 18th Middlesex (Pioneers) Regiment, accompanied by the 11th Field Company Royal Engineers, made a spirited counter-attack through Meteren taking some thirty prisoners. This was followed at 6 p.m. by a counter-attack by the French, who pushed through our troops to take over the line. The attack was not, however, carried far enough forward, and at midnight the situation was practically unaltered.

Our left by the Windmill had been bent back a little upon Meteren. The guns, therefore, of 2nd Lieutenant Kallend were redisposed for the protection of the left flank and to cover the height of Fontaine Houck.

Battalion Headquarters was ordered to rejoin the vicinity of Divisional Headquarters at 4 p.m. on this day, but not before the C.O. and Adjutant had both been seriously gassed but remained at duty.

Early on 17th further attacks, chiefly by infiltration, were made by the enemy attempting to increase his hold in Meteren. These were repulsed but the situation remained most obscure. The C.O. and Adjutant were sent by the General Staff to reconnoitre our line and, if necessary, redispose our guns to fill any gaps, and to give depth to our defences on the support line running through Moolenacker, Pinchboom, Les Quatre Fils Aymon, and the Reserve Line running through Fletre, Les Rouklos Hill and Schaexken.

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Half "A" and half "C" Companies were disposed in depth, one Company (less one Section), therefore remaining in reserve.

Battalion Headquarters was moved to a more central position between the two Brigades, to a Farmhouse about three quarters of a mile further North-west.

A large amount of ammunition, new belt boxes and guns were sent up during this day, and sent by pack animals and limbers up to the line during the night, which was quiet. In this respect the D.A.D.O.S. had during the whole action rendered the Battalion the best support, new guns and material even being sent up in his own car at the shortest notice.

On the morning of the 18th it was apparent that the enemy had exhausted himself. No further attacks were made, and our lines were linked up and consolidated. The Companies in Reserve were withdrawn to good shelter behind Mont de Cats, but artillery activity on both sides remained very considerable.

On the night of the 18th-19th the Battalion—"B" Company rejoining in the concentration area—was relieved by the 1st Australian Battalion Machine Gun Corps, and was withdrawn to rest behind Cassel.

### OPERATIONS CARRIED OUT BY "B" COMPANY UNDER 100TH INFANTRY BRIGADE.

There is much obscurity concerning the action of this Company, largely owing to the fact that the Brigade on both flanks of General Baird's Brigade gave way, so that the fighting both of Infantry and Machine Guns assumed a character of desperate hand-to-hand struggles. Little co-ordination was possible.

At dawn on the 12th April the 100th Infantry Brigade was disposed in the prepared and wired Army Line running through Neuve Eglise and Kortepyp, covering the approaches to Bailleul, with the 16th K.R.R.C. on the right, the 2nd Battalion Worcestershire Regiment on the left, with the 9th Battalion H.L.I. (Glasgow Highlanders) in Reserve, disposed along the Ravelsburg Heights.

"B" Company, under Major Lomax, was disposed with three Sections in depth in the forward zone, and one Section dug-in covering the approaches to Ravelsburg Heights.

On the morning of the 13th April, 1918, a determined attack was made against the 100th Infantry Brigade, with "B" Company in co-operation, who were in position in the Army Line outside Neuve Eglise. Aided by a





THE ATTACK UPON GOUZEAUCOURT. 15TH SEPTEMBER, 1918.

CHAPEL HILL

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heavy mist, which did not lift until the morning was well advanced, the attacking enemy debouched from the many enclosures and buildings in which they had assembled, and before our outposts were aware of it, they were captured. An intense bombardment further assisted the enemy's progress. The 16th K.R.R.C. on the right were forced back around their Battalion Headquarters, where for several hours they put up a stubborn fight, assisted by gun teams under Sergeant Thain, Sergeant Adkins and Sergeant Bickerstaffe, both the latter N.C.O.'s being killed while fighting gallantly. On the left where the 2nd Worcestershire Regiment were in position, the situation became obscure. At the same time 2nd Lieutenant Marshall was wounded and his two teams were overwhelmed, Sergeant R. J. Boast and Corporal Anderson with their teams being taken prisoners.

Further up the hill towards the village of Neuve Eglise were two other teams of No. 1 Section under Corporals J. Gilbert and P. McBride. They perceived that the right flank of the 2nd Worcestershire Regiment was gradually being forced back in confusion. Corporal Gilbert's team was captured in the hand-to-hand fighting which ensued, but Corporal McBride opened heavy fire and succeeded in pinning the enemy for a time to the ground.

For a time only; for he discovered the left flank being forced back, his solitary machine gun being the pivot on which two big backward movements were swinging.

Corporal McBride swung his gun through its traverse and deliberately exposed his rear in order to stem the tide on his left.

The approach of night enabled the enemy to persevere in his attempts at local penetration. The team was without escort of any kind, and with no clear idea of the support on their flanks. Enemy patrols approached them repeatedly, and fired on them; shadows flitted past them on all sides, whether friend or foe they knew not. The Corporal's two remaining comrades, Privates J. Maulkin and A. Cator, worked unceasingly, carrying up ammunition and filling belts, and maintaining a look-out at the gun.

At dawn the team knew that they were almost surrounded. One outlet remained for escape and they withdrew the gun, tripod and belt boxes to the Village of Neuve Eglise.

The team found the remnants of the 2nd Worcestershire Regiment posted at points of vantage in the Village, with their Battalion Headquarters, under Lieutenant-Colonel Stoney, in the Mairie. That day saw some of the bitterest hand-to-hand fighting ever known to British soldiers. It is impossible to describe how our men fought every inch of their retreat, pressed back by continual fresh forces and overwhelming numbers. Many gallant

sorties were made by the Worcestershires, led by the Assistant-Adjutant, who was awarded the V.C. for his conduct.

Gradually the line fell back astride the Wulverghem Road and the Village Square and Battalion Headquarters became the front line. Corporal McBride stemmed repeated rushes of the enemy up the streets leading to the Square, and across its wide space he poured his withering fire with murderous effect. Privates Maulkin and Cator were untiring in their devotion to duty.

At length it became imperative to withdraw the Headquarters of the 2nd Worcestershires as they were in imminent danger of again being surrounded. The delicate task of covering this withdrawal was entrusted to Corporal McBride's team. This was successfully carried out and a line consolidated West of the Village, where reinforcements had arrived, whilst powerful French artillery had been brought into line by the presence of mind of General Baird, who undoubtedly here, as formerly, by his brilliant leadership and initiative saved the situation and gave success.

Of the part played by "B" Company, the feats of Corporal McBride are outstanding. He was never out of action as a Machine Gunner. When one gun was destroyed he found another, and got it into action. He mounted his gun in the Mairie window and fired into the backs of the enemy as they attempted to force an entrance into the Church, stoutly defended by Lieutenant-Colonel Stoney, and the 2nd Battalion Worcestershire Regiment, assisted by the Chaplain, the Reverend Tanner, M.C. When the enemy attempted to rush the Mairie and bomb the occupants out of it, Corporal McBride, with rifle in hand, shot the arms of the bombers exploding their bombs, from round the corner of the doorway, whilst his team fired rifle grenades at point blank range over the wall of the Mairie garden.

Privates Maulkin and Cator most valiantly assisted Corporal McBride. This team, with the Headquarters of the 2nd Battalion Worcestershire Regiment, were the last British troops to leave Neuve Eglise. The casualties of the three Sections which up to now had been engaged were very heavy.

During the action the Sections under 2nd Lieutenant Turner and 2nd Lieutenant Paley respectively, were very hotly engaged, but in the confusion which followed, their fire was often masked by the retiring Infantry. Corporal Harrison and Private Ward fought their two guns with great gallantry. 2nd Lieutenant Paley who, with his Section was in position at Kortepyp, attempted to retire his guns on Neuve Eglise, but was twice severely wounded and eventually had to retire from the battle leaving his Section to fight undirected.

The Minimum Reserve of the 100th Infantry Brigade was thrown into the gap between Neuve Eglise and Ravelsburg on the 14th under Major Donaldson, of the 2nd Worcestershires, and was not again seen.

The Battalion was selected for honours, together with another Unit in the Division, the 2nd Battalion Worcestershire Regiment, by being mentioned in the Corps Special Order of the operations, as under :—

IXTH CORPS SPECIAL ORDER No. 2.

The following "Record" is made of the action described below.

33RD BATTALION MACHINE GUN CORPS.

12TH—19TH APRIL, 1918.

On the night of the 11th—12th April, the enemy had captured both Merville and Estaires, some seven miles South of Meteren, but the situation was somewhat obscure, and machine guns, in conjunction with the 19th Infantry Brigade, took up an outpost line covering the approaches East and South of Meteren. By 10.30 a.m. on the 12th April the enemy had advanced very rapidly, both from the East and from the South, and had it not been for the excellent use made of an abandoned motor lorry which quickly brought up eight more guns and teams, Meteren would have undoubtedly fallen into the enemy's hands. By skilful handling of his machine guns Lieutenant-Colonel Hutchison was able to hold off the enemy and fill up all gaps that occurred in our line so that by nightfall on the 12th April the line, though thinly held, was continuous. On the 13th a heavy hostile attack was successfully dealt with, during which the enemy must have suffered enormous losses. In one instance, 200 horsemen were decimated by the fire of one section under 2nd Lieutenant Watts. In spite of the hard fighting of the two previous days, night harassing fire was maintained during the night of 13th—14th. The 14th was probably the most critical day of these operations. At dawn the enemy launched heavy attacks against our positions and our line was penetrated in many places. The enemy exploited these gains to full advantage by pushing forward his light machine guns. On this occasion, very valuable service was rendered by Major W. C. Andrew, Second in Command, who handled his machine guns very skilfully, and by filling gaps and forming defensive flanks, prevented the enemy from penetrating our line to any depth. The maintenance of our line was undoubtedly due to the splendid devotion to duty and initiative displayed by the Machine Gunners, whose losses were very severe. This line was held by machine guns in face of great odds

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until ordered to withdraw on the evening of the 14th instant, this withdrawal being carried out in the most creditable manner, without further loss either to personnel or material, showing the excellent state of training and efficiency within the Battalion.

On the 16th April the enemy again made a determined attack after heavy bombardment against our positions South-east of Meteren, during which the Machine Gunners did great execution. It was during this attack that the enemy gained a footing in Meteren, where he was held, and the line handed over in this position on the night of the 18th-19th April.

Throughout the operations the action of the 33rd Battalion Machine Gun Corps very materially assisted in preventing the enemy from capturing the Meteren position and exploiting the gains made by him during the first day's fighting.

(Signed) W. MAXWELL SCOTT,  
*Brigadier-General,*  
General Staff, IXth Corps.

In conclusion, there is no doubt whatever that had not the 33rd Division been present in Meteren early on the morning of the 12th, and actively alert with its reconnaissances and outposts, the gap which existed on a three mile front, roughly between Bailleul and Merris, would have been penetrated; and that the enemy, who showed such an extraordinary rapid advance and activity, would probably have seized Mont de Cats by the evening of the 12th. Had he done so there is no doubt that our whole position at Ypres would have been imperilled, whilst from this point of vantage and observation he might conceivably have successfully driven through to the Channel Ports.

The following message was received from Commander-in-Chief:—

9th Corps Wire.

“The Commander-in-Chief has just been at Corps Headquarters. He would have liked to see all ranks now fighting on the 9th Corps front and to tell each one of them of his personal appreciation of the magnificent fight they have made and are making. He would have liked to shake hands with each individual and thank him for what he has done. He has not time for this, but has asked me to give everybody this message.”

*18th April, 1918.*



MAJOR A. HUSKISSON, M.C. AND BAR,  
COMMANDING "C" COMPANY.



CLEANING GUNS AND LIMBERS AFTER THE  
FIGHT.





*METEREN—NEUVE EGLISE*

---

The following Officers, N.C.O.'s and Men were specially noted for splendid work during the operations and were awarded such decorations as are noted—

Lieutenant-Colonel G. S. Hutchison, M.C., awarded the D.S.O.  
Major W. C. Andrew, Second in Command, awarded the M.C.  
2nd Lieutenant J. D. McLaren, Intelligence Officer, awarded the M.C.  
2nd Lieutenant J. M. McKenzie, awarded the M.C.  
R.Q.M.S. A. Scott, awarded the M.M.  
Sergeant J. Sturch (" B " Company) awarded the D.C.M.  
Sergeant G. St. Ledger (Scouts) " "  
Sergeant E. Perry (" C " Company) " "  
Sergeant A. Moorcroft (" C " Company) " "  
Sergeant C. Sparrow (Pioneers) " "  
Corporal P. McBride (" B " Company) " "  
Corporal J. Noblett (Signals) " "  
Corporal W. Hurd (" C " Company) " "  
Corporal W. Bawn (Scouts) " "  
Lance-Corporal J. Busby (Scouts) " "  
Lance-Corporal J. McKay (Transport) " "  
Lance-Corporal W. Bailey (Signals) " "  
Driver Sharples, M.T., A.S.C., (attached) " "  
Sergeant J. Carmichael (" B " Company) ,, Military Medal  
Sergeant A. Moorhouse (" B " Company) " "  
Sergeant T. Hunt (" A " Company) " "  
Corporal J. Phillipson (" B " Company) " "  
Corporal E. Healey (" A " Company) " "  
Lance-Corporal J. Lewin (" B " Company) " "  
Lance-Corporal G. Golding (" C " Company) " "  
Lance-Corporal A. Penlington (Scouts) " "  
Lance-Corporal R. C. Waller (Scouts) " "  
Lance-Corporal R. Crawford (Scouts) " "  
Lance-Corporal C. Clarkson (Scouts) " "  
Private J. Partington (Scouts) " "  
Private G. H. Davies (Scouts) " "  
Private G. Taylor (Transport) " "  
Private F. Hicks (Transport) " "  
Private L. Cocker (Signals) " "  
Private J. McNeil (" C " Company) " "  
Private E. Foster (" C " Company) " "  
Private D. W. Lewis (" B " Company) " "

*METEREN—NEUVE EGLISE*

---

Private A. Matthews ("B" Company)	awarded Military Medal
Private A. Hellier (Scouts)	" "
Private J. Maulkin ("B" Company)	" "
Sergeant W. Forrester (Signals)	" "
Sergeant J. Flavin ("A" Company)	„ Bar to M.M.
Private J. Aitken ("B" Company)	" "





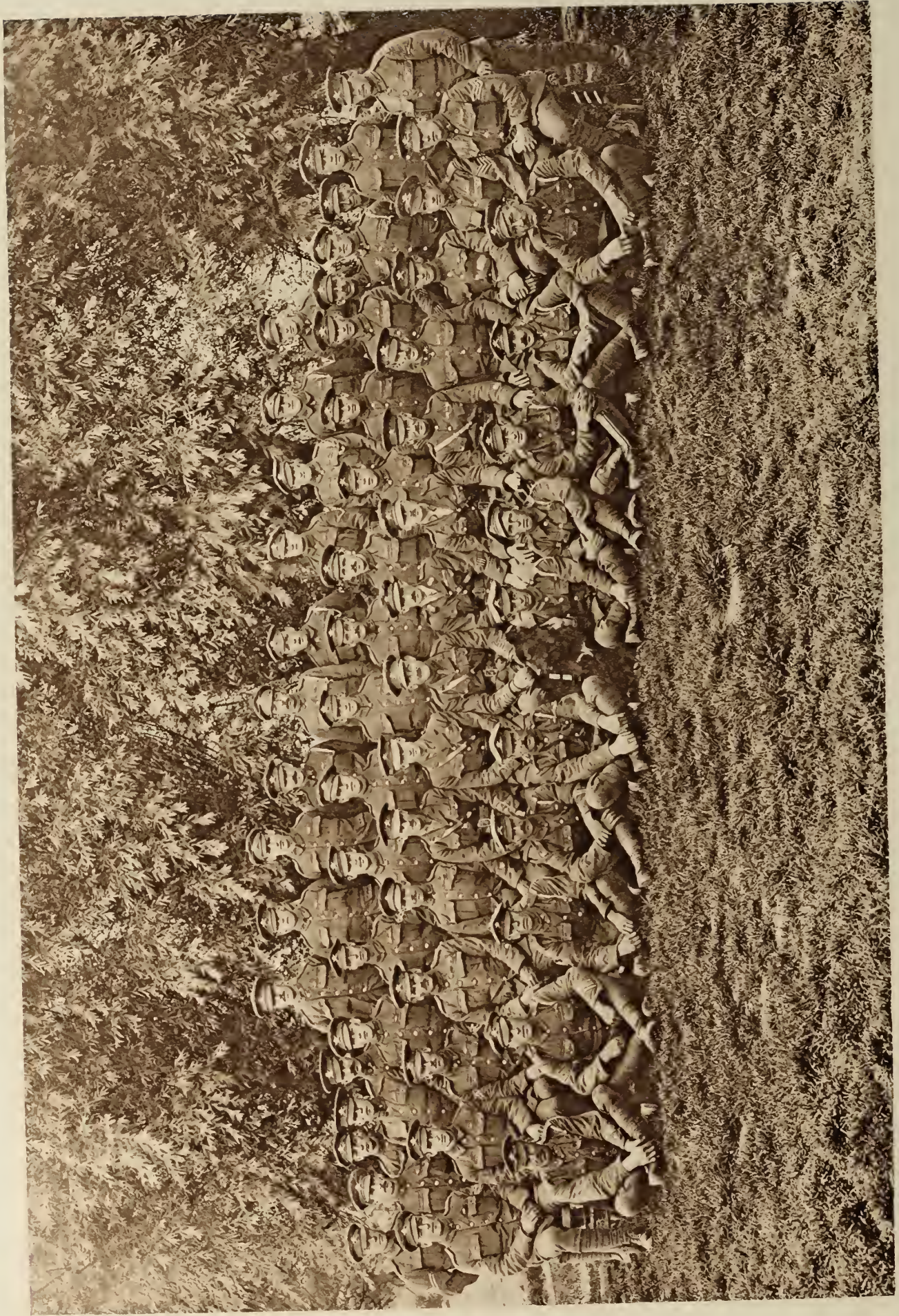
RIDGE WOOD, DICKENBUSH, (Drawn by *ptc.*  
*J. Jamieson from a Sketch by Lieut.-Col.*  
*G. S. Hutchison, D.S.O., M.C.*)



VLAMERTINGHE. (From a Sketch by Lieut -  
Col. G. S. Hutchison, D.S.O., M.C.)







1914 STAR GROUP. BOONE CAMP. 4TH  
AUGUST, 1918.





BAND  
33<sup>RD</sup> BATT<sup>N</sup> M.G.C.

THE BAND.







BELGIAN BATTERY CORNER, KRUISTAAT.  
(From a Sketch by Lieut.-Col. G. S. Hutchison,  
D.S.O., M.C.)



GUARD ROOM AND WORKSHOPS. BOONE CAMP.



THE FOOTBALL TEAM.

Top Row : Corpl. Kerr, Lce.-Corp. Fitzgerald, Pte. Fletcher, Lce.-Corp. Thomson, Corpl. Milthorpe.  
 2nd Row : Sergt. Dowds, M.M., Capt. Druitt, M.C., Major Dean, M.C., D.C.M., C.S.M. Roberts, M.M.,  
 Lce.-Corp. McNicol.  
 3rd Row : Pte. Spencer, Pte. Dyke.

Piecc.	Title.	Composer.
1. MARCH.	"THE BATTLE OF THE GLADIATORS"	T. FUCIK.
2. OVERTURE.	"FOUR ANNI PEASANT"	SUP. E.
3. WALTZ.	THOUGHTS	K. ALFORD.
4. SELECTION.	"LA BOHEME"	G. PIZZINI.
5. DESCRIPTIVE GALOP.	"THE VOTOK"	T. BIDGOOD.
6. SELECTION.	"CARMINEIRA"	F. LASSALLY.
7. SERENADE.	"LA PALOMAS"	S. YARDIE P.
8. DANCES FROM.	"KING HENRY VII"	F. CIERMAN.

On the left and right sides of the list are illustrations of soldiers in uniform, one on each side, holding rifles.

At the bottom right, there is a signature "Elisabeth" and some other handwritten notes, including "T.S. Hutchinsont", "Camp 82nd Bn. M.G.", "BATT. MACH. GUN CORPS.", and "55th BATT. MACH. GUN CORPS."

BAND PROGRAMME AUTOGRAPHED BY T.M. KING ALBERT AND QUEEN ELISABETH OF THE BELGIANS. YPRES. 5TH AUGUST, 1918.



## CHAPTER VII.

MAY TO AUGUST, 1918.

### DICKEBUSCH—RIDGE WOOD—BILLETTS AND CAMPS—THE BAND—TRAINING THE AMERICANS.

From Cassel the Battalion moved by road to the Noordepeene area for a period of about a week. Whilst in this area the Battalion was inspected by Generals Pinney and Baird.

Lieutenant W. H. Whiting joined the Battalion at this period with the appointment of Quartermaster, and in consequence of this, and to casualties in action, the command of the Battalion was re-organized, with Major W. Lewthwaite, M.C., commanding "A" Company, with Captain Hanson as Second in Command; Major Lomax and Captain Lockhart with "B" Company. 2nd Lieutenant A. Huskisson, M.C., who had acted as Quartermaster, was appointed to command "C" Company, with Captain Moore as Second in Command; and Major Atherton commanding "D" Company, with Captain Grant as Second in Command.

After two days' rest at Noordepeene the Division was again moved by march route to Blairinghem, and thence by 'bus to the Dickebusch Sector, with Dickebusch Lake inclusive.

It was by now clear that the great German offensive had been broken, its way being barred on both the road to Paris and the road to the Calais Port. But although the main force of the onslaught was broken, the German troops were still being flung into the attack in enormous numbers.

The 33rd Division relieved the 14th Chasseurs Division on the 6th May East of Dickebusch Lake, the line running through Ridge Wood and Scottish Wood. Before the Division took over, the enemy had already captured Kemmel Hill from the French and was outflanking our position in Ridge Wood at La Clytte. On the 8th May the enemy delivered a very violent

attack against the 98th and 19th Brigades on this front. These Brigades were supported by "D" and "B" Companies amongst the front posts, with "C" Company in close support and "A" Company in Reserve. The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders in particular, fought with the greatest heroism, but were driven back out of Ridge Wood into the Western side of Scottish Wood, whilst the enemy succeeded in driving a wedge between the Cameronians and the former Regiment. Into this breach Lieutenant Liddiard and Sergeant Goode and Corporal McKirdy thrust forward their Section, and by their fire not only inflicted heavy casualties on the enemy, but effectively checked his advance. Lieutenant Liddiard was seriously wounded during this day, but would not permit himself to be borne from the field by the stretcher party until he had given orders for the conduct of his Section. The Cameronians, in particular, had suffered heavy casualties, as had also the French on the right of the 33rd Division. A second attack was delivered about 2 p.m., but broke down again before our lines. To meet this attack, two Sections of "C" Company had been brought up to Hallebaast Corner on the Dickebusch Road, and were most effectively handled by Lieutenant Stentiford, M.C., Lance-Corporal Storr and Private McLean with Private Ayres (acting as Runner).

Whilst this attack was developing the Divisional Commander had already decided to make an immediate counter-attack and recapture Ridge Wood and restore the gap in the line between the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders and the Cameronians. The 5th Scottish Rifles were moved from the extreme right of the Divisional front round the back of the Dickebusch Lake, where they were well screened from observation by the trees surrounding the Lake, and were then most carefully deployed by Lieutenant Colonel Spens, D.S.O., and a most energetic counter-attack, carried out with outstanding valour and enterprise, rewon the whole of the ground lost. The guns of "D" and "C" Companies, in particular, again rendered most valuable assistance by their fire and found excellent targets. On the 10th-11th May the Division was relieved by the 44th Regiment d'Infanterie, the machine guns being relieved under the direction of Le Capitaine Medino, a most intelligent and brave Officer, who was last seen by us disappearing into a cloud of smoke through a very heavy barrage, clad in a long blue overcoat which flowed behind him like a dressing gown, and bareheaded, wearing both his medals, the Legion d'Honneur and Croix de Guerre, swinging on his overcoat. We remember him distinctly eating porridge for the first time with his knife and fork, the porridge itself being seasoned with whiskey to make it a thoroughly Scottish dish!



For this action the following awards were made :—

Captain Stentiford, M.C.	..	..	..	..	..	Bar to the M.C.
Sergeant Goode, M.M.	..	..	..	..	..	D.C.M.
Corporal McKirdy	..	..	..	..	..	D.C.M.
Sergeant Hendrie, M.M.	..	..	..	..	..	Bar to M.M.
Lance-Corporal Storr	..	..	..	..	..	M.M.
Privates Allen, Willett, Fereday, Hicks, Ayres and Gilbert						M.M.

The Division marched out to find what camping grounds in the fields for itself it could, between Poperinghe and Abeele. Everywhere lines and lines of new trenches and many hundreds of miles of barbed wire were feverishly being placed in position, whilst the Yser and Lys Rivers had been dammed and the banks of the canals broken down so that should necessity arise, in order to reach the Channel Ports, the Germans would now have to undertake naval operations.

No particular spot had been allotted to this Battalion, so the Commanding Officer marched the Battalion into a large green pasture field close to St. Jan Ter Beizen, adjoining Boone Farm. A few tents and bivouac sheets were given to the Battalion from which it could make what shelter was possible.

It was at this period that Major McPherson, M.C., D.C.M., was absorbed into the Battalion with ten N.C.O.'s and men from the 30th Battalion. He was appointed to command "D" Company, with Captain Atherton as Second in Command, Captain Grant having proceeded home.

Major McPherson had already served as a Machine Gunner with the 19th Brigade during 1914 and 1915, being seriously wounded at Loos. He now returned to us with a greater fighting reputation.

#### THE BAND.

The Band, which during the past six months has proved itself to be a most important feature in the success and popularity of the Battalion, came to this Battalion under most mysterious circumstances which may now be related.

The 18th Battalion Manchester Regiment, to which the Band originally belonged, was disbanded in February, 1918, and the Band was lent to the 30th Battalion Machine Gun Corps.

After the heavy fighting and losses of March and April it was decided to disband the 30th Division. The 30th Division was at this time

co-operating with the 33rd Division. Although the Band was under orders to proceed to another Unit, they were by now trained Gunners; and, taking into account considerations of the supply of man-power for the Machine Gun Corps, the fact that the Band themselves wanted to remain together as one Unit with the Machine Gun Corps, and the fact that possession is nine points of the law, and chiefly because Lieutenant-Colonel Hutchison was determined to have a band, a wire was sent to D.A.G., 3rd Echelon, asking for permission "to transfer forty specialists," including Major McPherson, M.C., D.C.M., and ten expert Machine Gunners of his old Company to this Battalion. This was granted as an Order. This order, succeeding the original order for the transfer of the Band to another Unit, which will not be specified, obviously overrode it. The Band remained and started to play. Quoting the authority of the D.A.G.'s wire, the Band members were next transferred to the Machine Gun Corps on the weekly A.F., B. 213, and became permanent Machine Gunners. The instruments were next collected from Watou. They were found to be worn out and mostly damaged. It was decided on the spot to re-equip the Band completely. Lieutenant Dean was sent urgently to London to purchase new instruments, stands, slings and cases, and a vast repertoire of music; and in a fortnight's time the Band of forty-two performers, now reinforced by other musical Machine Gunners found from within the old Battalion, was a *fait accompli*. Over £600 was spent in re-equipping the Band. The stealing of the Band has been described as the "biggest ramp" of the war! At any rate, as a conjuring trick, that is, the art of producing something instantaneously without being detected, it probably rivals any other similar trick performed during the war. In any case, it made the Band happy, it made the C.O. happy, and it made the Battalion happy; and its unrivalled performances added to the happiness of nearly every Unit in the Division and of many outside it.

The musicians themselves, under Sergeant P. Ogden, as Musical Director, originally were Members of the 18th (Pals) Battalion Manchester Regiment, and had previously seen very heavy fighting, particularly on the Somme in 1916 and in March, 1918. Most of them had over two years' service in France and many had been wounded.

The drums were painted by Private Arthurs and their design was most striking and original.

The Band was particularly honoured when it played before H.M. King George at Lovie Chateau on the occasion of his visit to the 2nd Army in June, 1918; and during lunch, before their Majesties the King and Queen of the Belgians in July, 1918, at 2nd Army Headquarters, when the Band-

master P. Ogden was presented to their Majesties, who expressed high praise of the Band. Both the King and Queen put their autographs to the Band Programme.

Of the Band, 2nd Army Headquarters wrote to the C.O. on the 4th July, 1918:—

“We wish to take the first opportunity of thanking you for the  
“loan of your splendid band to-day.”

And on the 5th August:—

“wishes to convey to you his congratulations on the excellent  
“performance of your Band on the occasion of the visit of their  
“Majesties the King and Queen of the Belgians. The Programme was  
“much appreciated by their Majesties and by the Army Commander  
“and Staff of the 2nd Army, who thank you most heartily for lending  
“the Band on this occasion.”

#### BOONE CAMP.

Though informed at first that we were standing by for action within the hour, we made, nevertheless, Boone Camp our Rear Echelon, our home from home, for four busy months. At the outset the C.O. prepared a comprehensive scheme for Camp construction, based on a definite system of salvage from the battle area, by means of light railways and horse transport. The object of laying out the Camp was to provide a pleasant Camp for the entertainment of the Minimum Reserve, all Companies being in the line, and the Reserve being changed every two weeks. Shops, in neat, tiled huts, with red tiled sloping roofs were first made, followed by Officers' Messes, the Headquarters Mess being designed in four separate buildings, all under a camouflaged verandah; a splendid Canteen and three Recreation Rooms, with an Open Air Beer Garden, shaded with camouflage net erected above it. A Hospital with twelve beds; a Church with a richly carved oak altar, salvaged in Vlamertinghe, and Brass Vases and Ornaments made from shell cases by the Artificers, whilst imitation Stained Glass Windows were painted by Private Arthurs on sheets of oil cotton, and placed in the windows.

The Transport Lines were particularly fine and organized by Captain L. R. Hutchison, the twin brother of the C.O., who was now posted to the Battalion. Besides standings, harness rooms, forage barns, farrier's shop and sick lines were constructed, with a twenty foot well sunk, providing 300 gallons of water per diem for watering.

A splendid Boxing Tournament was held in the open under the energetic, keen and cheery direction of Company-Sergeant-Major-Instructor Donovan, of the Army P. and B.T. Staff, who joined the Battalion on its formation, and by his prowess with the gloves, his ready wit, sympathy and enthusiasm, quickly had endeared himself to all. Over fifty entries were obtained in the Battalion. The Tournament lasted for two days before huge crowds, the best fights being put up by Sergeant Parkes, who, although breaking a bone in his arm, stuck it out and won both his fight and the hearty applause of the crowd; Driver Challenor and Private McGregor. There were many bloody fights, but a splendid spirit of sportsmanship animated all. No man "chucked up the sponge," and no fouls were given.

Daily runs at 6.30 a.m. for one and a half miles were the order of the day, and owing to these, the splendid balmy weather, the vigorous inter-section football matches and those of basket ball, a new American game, and the excellent menu system organized by the Quartermaster and R.Q.M.S. Scott, the health of the Battalion improved daily; so much so that when the "Spanish Flu" had gripped the Division, together with the rest of the civilized and uncivilized world, we survived with half a dozen mild cases.

As at Potijze, a large Ground Map of the defences was made. Daily, scores of zealous soldiers were to be seen casting pebbles into the crystal waters of our baby Zillebeke Lake, a fit subject for the Medical Officer's lectures on Sanitation; while the C.O. repeatedly lectured all ranks, and the Americans, upon the principles of defence.

We were great on both Football or Basket Ball in those days, and a League was formed to discover the most proficient Company at these manly games. The Transport easily won the Basket Ball and Football Tournaments with a total of nineteen points out of twenty four. Headquarters being second, Band third, and the four Companies bringing up the rear; but the Companies claimed that their best men were up the line! The sports were full of excitement and crowds of excited supporters daily made the Welkin ring with their partisan cries and cheers. It was argued that the Referee forgot the score in the Band *versus* Transport match at Basket Ball, so great was it; said the Transport, who lost the replay, "Throw him to the Mules!"

It is understood that our Meteren Race and other unique "stunt events" in the gymkhanas are to be copied at the next Olympic Games.

Our personal friends and students, the Americans, from Carolina and Tennessee, were greatly impressed. On one well-remembered occasion a



DICKBUSCH LAKE. (Drawn by Lieut.-Col  
G. S. Hutchison, D.S.O., M.C., and Pic. J.  
Jameson.)

[Printed by Waterline Bros. & Layton, Limited.]



typical "son-of-a-gun" spat a black stream of tobacco juice accurately through the eye of a cleaning rod at ten yards to show us a stunt we could not do. We did not attempt to match him. They lowered our colours considerably one sunny Sunday morn at Basket Ball, yet, taking sport generally, we, like Smith and Warren's switchbacks, claim that though copied by many, we were excelled by none. There was in these times a terrible fear gnawing the vitals of our higher command lest "Gerry" should take a liking to "Pop" and St. Omer. So various lines were constructed—red, purple, brown, green, yellow, and blue—in fact, as many lines as had the Higher Command different colours in the paint box with which to paint the map; and it "was up to" the Boche to take these in turn, and for us to teach the "boys" from the Southern States that he could not take the latter before the former. For this purpose we studied our rainbow maps and our ground relief, and had our little tour in the line together. The infidels who had any doubts on the point were sent to construct and wire "Fort Hutchison," a most notable redoubt, until they should repent.

Nightly the "Aluminium Reserve" turned out with sixteen guns, on aircraft mountings, awaiting the advent of enemy planes, which swarmed at night raiding the hospitals and camps. When the aerial fly, with its heavy drone, walked into our parlour, "A" Company was on duty. A 'phone was fixed up from Camp to the Battery, and upon the C.O.'s order "Gerry up—Stand to—Half left—Fire," the roar of the guns rattled out upon the night. For a few minutes escape seemed probable; then the 'plane came swooping to earth dimly outlined against the starry sky. A cheer rose from the Camp, the guns ceased, and from all four corners of the Camp half-naked men were rushing madly across the fields towards the wreck of the shattered fabric. The occupants, one an Officer, the other a Sergeant, were both dead, and the Black Cross of the night hawk decorated the Camp thereafter.

Boone Camp, a fine boon to all, was an athletic and scholastic paradise. Much too soon we had to leave it and bid our adieux. We wonder who now inhabits its enclosure and violates its Transport Lines, where vicious mules ate the trees and kicked their drivers. No runners now dash out from its precincts for their early morning run; no Scouts for a bathe in the forbidden pool, defying wire and willows; no footballs seek refuge in that little central pond where the blue caddis fly dances. Sports, boxing, the Shrapnels, the band, barrage drill and other amusements with which the happy summer hours of 1918, on our rest days were beguiled, are things of the past. Perhaps its tiles and timbers are now displayed in many a Watou shop; new green grass may now have obliterated our wanton

tracks—yet its site will still remain—a little sloping meadow, a little pond with willows near the bottom, a small hedge surrounding, studded closely with lofty elms and poplars, two of which, scarred and dead, decorated by the shreds of a fallen aeroplane, will tell for a little time of the war that once did wage.

It was at this time that our Divisional Commander was honoured with the highest military distinction, being created a Knight Commander of the Bath. In thanking us for our congratulations at his honour, General Pinney in his charming manner gave to us peculiar pleasure.

33RD DIVISION.

5/6/18.

“Thank you and your Officers and men very much for your kind congratulations.

“My pleasure is greatly increased by knowing that you share it.

“The honour is a great one, and I look on it as an honour to the “Division as a whole, rather than to me as an individual.”

A special Battalion Order, of which several hundred copies were asked for by the men of the Battalion and sent home, is here reprinted.

“15th July, 1918.

“EVIDENCE IN THE CASE OF CIVILIZATION AGAINST THE HUN.

“During the minor operations on the 14th July, 1918, in which we “co-operated, twenty nine prisoners of the 5th and 8th Companies, “166th Infantry Regiment, of the 31st Division, were captured. This “Division is recruited in the Rhineland Province, in which is situated “Cologne, one of the most beautiful cathedral cities in the world.

“Upon these prisoners, almost without exception, were found the “most revolting photographic picture postcards, depicting British dead.

“In some cases, these photographs showed our dead stripped and “mutilated, being grinned upon by German soldiery. In one case, “the photograph showed a dead Highlander with his kilt up to his “chest, the whole of the lower limbs exposed naked, and a German “helmet placed over his privates; whilst a small crowd of German “soldiery stood facing the camera grinning.

“The postcard was taken from one of these prisoners. There were “several copies of this distributed among them. It is the least re- “revolting which I saw. It will be observed that none of these men





INTERIOR OF THE CHURCH, BOONE CAMP.



GERMAN PHOTOGRAPH. EVIDENCE IN THE CASE OF CIVILIZATION AGAINST THE HUN.



"DUNNY," BATTALION MASCOT. SERVED SOMME, ARRAS, MENIN ROAD, METEREN, DICKEBUSCH AND FINAL OPERATIONS. TWICE WOUNDED.



“ show signs of any shell wound ; they none of them show limbs  
“ missing or death agony ; they are in regular lines and are stripped ;  
“ one man has his hands tied behind his back ; one man whose face  
“ is clearly seen, has only recently died ; one man has his left hand in  
“ his pocket. From these indications it appears more than probable  
“ that these men were taken prisoners, were ordered to strip, and then  
“ brutally murdered in cold blood. It is most improbable that a cart  
“ driven by a cleanly dressed soldier, would have been present on a  
“ battlefield, unscarred by shell holes, to carry, as a mock hearse, men  
“ so freshly dead.

“ No white man, few savages, can look on even this photograph  
“ without feelings of disgust, rage and horror. Yet the Germans carry  
“ these photographs amongst those of their families in order that they  
“ may gloat again and again over their victims.

“ I hope that no man of this Battalion will forget this in his dealings  
“ with Germans both during this war and after.

“ I hope that the men of this Battalion who see this will tell their  
“ own friends and relations at home what they have seen. I hope that  
“ every man will do his best to ensure that those men and women of  
“ all classes who fawn upon German beasts in our prison camps, upon  
“ the farms or uninterned, are themselves faced with the full vengeance  
“ which we can mete out to those who so murder and mutilate our  
“ comrades whom we love.

(Signed) G. S. HUTCHISON.

*Lieutenant-Colonel,*

Commanding 33rd Battalion Machine Gun Corps.

#### AMERICAN INVASION.

JULY-AUGUST, 1918.

The advent of the Americans was announced loudly long before it came about. Rumour was at least a month ahead of them.

On the 15th July we met the Advance Guard of the 30th American Division Machine Gunners at Boone Camp.

The Plenipotentiaries arrived *en masse*, and struck one at first glance as a concourse of very grave men with extremely tight uniforms. There was much saluting, handshaking, and introductions, a diversion being produced

by the Band in full war paint, which vigorously played the "Star Spangled Banner."

Next evening, the first two Companies came into the line.

The arrival of the Americans was admirably stage-managed by the Boche. After several quiet nights heavy area shoots were put down on all approaches to the Sector. The roads forward from Ambulance Farm and Belgian Battery Corner were targets for continuous shelling.

Remarkable amongst the Americans were some personalities. There was one Company Commander whose whimsical mannerisms and quaint humour endeared him to all ranks. Tours round the guns with him were always full of interest. To all one had to say he gave a grave attention. He never lost the grim humour of the thing. The loud report at dead of night of a battery of ours would only provoke from him the caustic injunction, hardly audible, "Give 'em HELL!"

Very different was his Second in Command. He was as bulky and rubicund as his Company Officer was lean and pale. He expended so much energy in talking and laughing that he had none left for his legs (which, in any case, could never have carried his body!). Accordingly, like Diogenes, he remained in his dug-out, and from its darkneses delivered oracular judgment on the war. He was a great politician. He claimed to know the price of every man's vote in North Carolina!

The real American as we had pictured him, did not arrive in our midst until a week or two later. We had decided that these quiet, thinking men of North Carolina were not at all the popular type of "Yankee." Some of them were even proud to claim English descent! We wanted to justify our conception of the slack-jawed, keen-eyed man of quaint jargons and turns of speech that Mark Twain and others had introduced to us.

When Captain English arrived, we knew immediately that "the goods had been delivered." His first introduction was to unpeel before our eyes a cunningly twisted packet of chewing gum; and on noticing our admiring gaze as he capaciously took it between his jaws, his hand produced sundry other packets which he proceeded to hand round. Then, while we all chewed, he narrated his complete philosophical scheme with reference to the Canal Sector and the American attachment. He had "cottoned on" to the whole thing within five minutes. He only wanted the practical experience; he was here to learn; we could do what we liked with him or his Company; we were the right stuff; he saw that clearly. His journey up to Smyth Farm was a series of quixotic experiences, such as had come to no other man living; he had been blown up by a gas shell, and by a miracle had adjusted his box respirator before reaching the ground.





"Five minutes to go!"

"FIVE MINUTES TO GO." MACHINE GUNNERS WAITING IN READINESS TO GO OVER THE TOP. (From a Sketch by L.-Cpl. H. D. Bryden.)

[Printed by Waterlow Bros. & Layton, Limited.]



THE CLOTH HALL, YPRES. (From a Sketch  
by Lieut.-Col. G. S. Hutchison, D.S.O., M.C.)

[Printed by Waterlow Bros. & Layton, Limited.]





He had seen all colours of Verey Lights in the sky, and had theories on the use of each one of them. He had floundered about in ditches and shell holes until he had completely lost direction, but with unique forethought he had measured the bearing from nowhere to Smyth Farm, and by his trusty compass (which had never failed him in all preceding campaigns) he had at last attained his objective; despite a forty mile march that day, he was prepared to go round the Canal Sector this very night and learn what there was to learn.

And, to do him justice, he did learn it, and quickly, too. He seemed to jump into the idea of it at once. All the technicalities of machine gun defence were to him matters of intense interest.

There was also their energetic Battalion Commander, Captain Pierce, who had a boundless and justifiable admiration for our Commanding Officer.

The rank and file were slow, even lethargic, but they had a most intense hate for the Hun and always expressed a keen desire to go over the top and at him. They took an almost childish interest in the effect of our shelling. One Sergeant, in particular, used to peer continuously over the parapet, at the same time remarking, "Say, Loo-tenant, she shure is hitting them some." This was the only remark he ever was known to pass.

Later, we heard of the doings of the 30th American Division in the fierce fighting for the Hindenburg Line, round Le Catelet and Beaufort. Their losses, one heard, were very heavy, but that they had achieved great things; and we pardoned ourselves for a faint glow of pride that we had been honoured with the instruction of those gallant and earnest men of North Carolina.

The following letter was written by the Officer Commanding American Machine Gun Companies to the 33rd (British) Battalion Machine Gun Corps:—

*" 8th August, 1918.*

" It appears, to our great sorrow, that our Machine Gun Battalion  
" is about to be relieved from duty with your troops, and I trust that  
" you will permit me, in a humble manner, to attempt to express to  
" you and your most efficient Officers, my deep and sincere appreciation  
" of the most thorough and excellent Instruction which you have given  
" us during these three short weeks, and also to thank you for the  
" many courtesies that you have rendered us, and the kindest and most  
" chivalrous hospitality which you and your Officers have shown us.

" It is very gratifying to me to observe the marked improvement  
" in the Officers and Non-Commissioned Officers and Men of the seven  
" Machine Gun Companies under the guidance and tutorship of you and  
" your most worthy Officers and Non-Commissioned Officers.

MAY TO AUGUST, 1918

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“I would also like to thank the rank and file of your enlisted men  
“for their deep interest and untiring efforts in the instruction of our  
“Machine Gunners.

“I feel quite sure, from observation and what I have heard, that  
“no other American Machine Gun Battalion has had such good  
“advantages as this one while undergoing instruction in Europe I am  
“sure that the American Officers over us have observed the great  
“improvement which has been brought about through our instruction  
“under your Command.

“We are to be congratulated that we were attached to the 33rd  
“Battalion Machine Gun Corps for instruction.

“You know that most of this organization is from North Carolina.  
“Yes, ‘We are Tar Heels born and Tar Heels bred, and when we die,  
“‘we will be Tar Heels dead.’

“After this mighty conflict shall have ended, and our flags are  
“flying victoriously, we want you and your Officers and soldiers to  
“visit us in America, and we will show you some things that are  
“neither in open or trench warfare, which will give us the greatest  
“amount of pleasure.

(Signed) WENTWORTH W. PIERCE,  
*Captain 119th Infantry,*  
Commanding 115th Machine Gun Battalion.





"KEMMEL IS LOOKING AT YOU," (Drawn by  
Pte. J. Jameson from a Sketch by Lieut.-Col.  
G. S. Hutchison, D.S.O., M.C.)

## CHAPTER VIII.

AUGUST TO OCTOBER, 1918.

### THE CAMBRAI BATTLE—VILLERS GUISLAIN—PIGEON TRENCH—CANAL DE ST. QUENTIN—CLARY.

At the latter end of August, the Division was relieved by the 50th American Division in the Canal Sector, Ypres, and proceeded by rail to the Eperleques training area to refit for the final act of the great war drama. The whole of the Battalion was billeted at Hellebrouck, close beside the Canal. Brilliant sunshine and warm weather were the features of the first few days and every advantage was taken of bathing in the Canal, with rafts and boats of every description. Quite a number of people decided to try the effects upon the system of drowning, but were fortunately saved by their comrades. A particularly fine act was performed by Private Tom Reece, who, fully dressed, leapt into the Canal, swam about forty yards and rescued a drowning Officer in very deep water. He was awarded the Meritorious Service Medal for his bravery.

A grand Ceremonial Parade was held by the 100th Brigade, which the Battalion attended in full strength with the Band, and a few days later it was entrained in two trains for Sombrin, and was moved after a few days to Coullemont.

It was very sad that Sergeant Hendrie, who had served with us since 1914, and had so distinguished himself that he had received the Military Medal and Bar, should have been accidentally drowned whilst billeted in this village.

The Battalion was moved at night by twenty-two lorries from this area, *via* Albert and Bapaume to Rocquigny, the scene of our very bitter fighting on the 2nd-5th November, 1916. It "debussed" about 7 a.m. and occupied tents and such old Nissen huts and German stores as had not been entirely destroyed in the recent fighting. An enormous amount of material and salvage had been left behind by the retreating enemy at this point; this included millions of bottles of soda water, of which everybody availed themselves.

On the 15th September, an attack upon Gouzeaucourt and the high ground East of Vaucellette Farm, with the stronghold of Vaucellette Farm inclusive, was ordered by the 3rd Army under the command of General Sir Julian Byng. The 33rd Battalion Machine Gun Corps was ordered to support this attack with barrage fire, "C" and "D" Companies supporting the 17th Division, and "A" and "B" Companies supporting the 21st Division. The attack was most successful, and the barrage Companies, being out of range after the first day, were withdrawn.

The Division was moved on the 19th up to the Equancourt area, the Machine Gun Battalion being bivouacked the furthest forward beside Heudecourt.

Although enormous strides had been made to rebuild the railway it was still many miles behind, and completed work was frequently destroyed by delayed-action mines which still further hampered the progress. The roads, too, had suffered considerably both from shell fire and neglect; and with the enormous lorry traffic upon them, were in most cases nothing but broken tracks with a rough stone surface. Villages and farm buildings, as such, had ceased to exist, every structure having been either destroyed by shell fire, or deliberately blown up and gutted by the retreating enemy. Similarly also, the bridges over the Canal du Nord and small streams had to be rebuilt to carry the increasing and heavy traffic demand upon them. The progress of horse transport and infantry was confined solely to tracks across the country. After having passed over the desolation of the 1916 battlefields, except for the complete destruction of the villages as already mentioned, the countryside had not been seriously disturbed. In certain localities, where heavy fighting had occurred during the German offensive of March, 1918, the ground was much broken by shell holes, but otherwise was easily passable. Considering the obstacles which it had to overcome, it seems almost incredible that the British advance could have been made so rapidly; and that it continued, after the conquest of the Hindenburg Line, in October even more rapidly.

The 33rd Division took over the attack from the 21st Division between the series of trenches which had been our old front line at the end of the Somme operations. This included Poplar Trench and Beech Walk, lying West of Villers Guislain and just East of Epehy.

It was apparent from the outset that the task of the 33rd Division would be peculiarly difficult. As had always been its misfortune the Division was thrown into the battle not when there was a chance of surprise, or when a carefully prepared artillery barrage of great strength could support it, but when the advance was held up, or had been held up, by a system of defended works of unusual strength. This may be compared to the



PIGEON QUARRY AND TARGELLE RAVINE FROM MEATH POST, SHOWING THE ARTILLERY BOMBARDMENT COVERING THE ADVANCE OF THE 33RD DIVISIONAL PATROLS OPERATING AGAINST THE HINDENBURG LINE, 1ST OCTOBER, 1918. (From an Oil Sketch by Lieut.-Col. G. S. Hutchison, D.S.O., M.C.).

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tasks assigned to the Division at High Wood, and Les Boeufs in 1916; at Fontaine Les Croisilles in the Hindenburg Line, and at Polygon Wood in the Menin Road battle in 1917. An assault was ordered upon the outer defences of the Hindenburg Line, including the capture of Villers Guislain and the network of trenches and posts commanding the approaches to the Canal de St. Quentin. Artillery support was weak, neither were tanks available. Villers Guislain itself was exceptionally strong, being defended by machine guns at every point and by concrete pill-boxes.

The attack was carried out by the 98th Brigade, closely supported by "D" Company under Major McPherson, M.C., D.C.M., and by the 19th Brigade supported by "B" Company, under Major Lomax, whilst the thin artillery barrage was strengthened by the fire of "A" and "C" Companies, under Majors Lewthwaite, M.C., and Huskisson, M.C., respectively, positioned in Cricket Trench just East of Vaucellette Farm. The attack was launched at dawn on the 21st September and in most cases succeeded in obtaining a footing in the enemy line.

The enemy on this front were the Alpine Corps, who during the whole course of the war, had gained a reputation for the possession of the highest fighting qualities. The 14th Jäger Regiment was positioned opposite the 33rd Divisional front. A few prisoners were taken in the initial assault, but the German Machine Gunners tenaciously held their ground, inflicting a very heavy loss on our troops, particularly on the 2nd Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, the 4th King's and 1st and 5th Cameronians. The fighting swayed backwards and forwards between the two lines, attack being followed by counter-attack, during the whole day. The work of the German snipers was also deadly; whilst on our side, the machine guns, particularly those under 2nd Lieutenant James, Sergeant Greenway, Sergeant Bennett, Corporal Turner, Lance-Corporal Jacobs, Lance-Corporal Wright and Private Jones, fought with the greatest gallantry, inflicting very heavy losses on the enemy counter-attacks. No losses, however, appeared too great for the enemy, who by evening had driven our troops from his lines. Especially gallant work was carried out during this day by Private O'Donnell of the Scouts, who repeatedly crept forward right into the enemy lines under the heaviest fire to discover the position of the German machine guns and to direct the fire of our guns upon them. An attempt was made to capture the enemy's line by a surprise attack during the night, but although it established itself in Gloucester Road, by swift counter-attack, the enemy again drove out our troops. The 100th Brigade followed the 19th Brigade, and the assault upon Meath Post and Pigeon Trench was renewed. The whole period was one of the greatest strain upon the Gunners. Casualties

*AUGUST TO OCTOBER, 1918*

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from shell fire were by no means light, whilst the prolonged gas bombardments, despite our precautions, inflicted heavy casualties amongst us. The Signallers, in particular, who had rendered valuable assistance, were, from the very nature of their work, the easiest victims of gas poisoning and suffered heavily. Both Major McPherson and his Second in Command, Captain Atherton, of "D" Company were blinded by gas and were carried away in a very serious condition; similarly also, Lieutenant McQueen and Lieutenant McLaren, M.C., were stricken down. Although the enemy had experimented in April with the employment of high explosive combined with gas shelling, he now introduced a bombardment in which every high explosive shell of all calibres contained gas. The pitiful sight of men struggling back to the Aid Posts with their limbs burnt, with lungs gripped as in a vice, green coloured in the face, retching, and in ghastly agony, will not be forgiven for many years to the Hun. During the whole period the fire of our guns was almost continuous in order to prevent the enemy bringing up reinforcements or to strengthen his position. For this action Major Huskisson was awarded the Bar to his Military Cross, 2nd Lieutenant James was awarded the Military Cross and Sergeant Greenway of "B" Company, and Private O'Donnell and Private Cator were awarded the D.C.M. Military Medals were awarded as under:—

Sergeant H. J. Bennett.	Lance-Corporal A. Thompson.
Sergeant G. Dagg.	Lance-Corporal H. Wright.
Sergeant J. Maulkin.	Lance-Corporal W. Young.
Sergeant J. H. Stewart.	Private G. Brodhurst.
Corporal S. Jacobs.	Private T. C. L. Cooper.
Corporal W. Light.	Private J. Fitton.
Corporal E. Wood.	Private C. Jones.
Lance-Corporal C. Clarkson (Bar).	Private T. G. McManus.
Lance-Corporal M. Johnson.	Private G. W. MacGregor.
Lance-Corporal W. O. Miller.	Private M. Osborne.
Lance-Corporal W. Stephens.	Private G. Taylor.
Lance-Corporal J. Turner.	Private P. Woodward.
	Private N. Woodhead.

Generally speaking, the attack upon the Hindenburg Line between Cambrai and St. Quentin had not been successful. The enemy had put up a hitherto unmet-with resistance; very few prisoners had been taken; whilst both sides, after the bitterest fighting, had suffered heavily. The enemy's position at Villers Guislain was in the process of being outflanked





HEADQUARTERS, 33RD BATTALION, MACHINE GUN CORPS. 4TH AUGUST, 1918.

*Top Row:* Mons. P. R. Renier, M.M., Interpreter; Capt. Rev. E. Teale, M.C., Chaplain; Lieut. W. H. Whiting, Quartermaster; R.S.M. A. Kiddie, M.C., D.C.M., Regtl. Sgt.-Major; Lieut. A. Cook (U.S.A.), Medical Officer.

*2nd Row:* Capt. L. R. Hutchison, M.C., Transport Officer; Major W. C. Andrew, D.S.O., M.C., 2nd in Command; Lieut.-Col. G. S. Hutchison, D.S.O., M.C., Commanding; Capt. and Adjut. G. Harrison, M.C. and bar, Adjutant; 2nd Lieut. P. Dean, M.C., D.C.M. and bar, Asst. Adjutant.

*3rd Row:* Lieut. E. Crosbie-Oates, Signal Officer; "Jim"; 2nd Lieut. J. D. McLaren, M.C., Intelligence Officer.



MAJOR P. DEAN, M.C., D.C.M. AND BAR. COMMANDING "D" COMPANY FROM OCTOBER, 1918.



MAJOR A. McPHERSON, M.C., D.C.M. COMMANDING "D" COMPANY, APRIL TO OCTOBER, 1918.

from the North, whilst the 12th Division had established themselves on the high ground overlooking the enemy's positions on the Canal de St. Quentin at Honnecourt. An attack on a very wide front was ordered for the 29th September. It was intended that the German position between Villers Guislain and Venduille, either should be outflanked on both flanks by the pressure of the armies on the left and right of the 3rd Army, so that the advance of the 33rd Division would consist of a peaceful penetration into ground vacated by the enemy; or surrendered to us, possibly, by the capture of a large number of Germans whose line of retreat would be cut off by the St. Quentin Canal in their rear. On the day of the great attack, except for violent bursts of fire, no action was taken by the 33rd Division. On the evening of this day it was reported that the attack upon the passage of the Canal at Venduille and the advance of the Americans and the Fourth Army astride the Hindenburg Line, had not been carried out according to plan. In the North the attack was more successful, but, although Cambrai itself was captured, our losses had been far heavier than had been anticipated and it was necessary to reorganize the forces disposed in the attack. It was apparent also that the forces opposed to the 33rd Division had not vacated their position, and that a very large number of machine guns were still commanding the approaches—Targelle Ravine and Pigeon Valley—on the St. Quentin Canal.

It was ordered by the 5th Corps that the 33rd Division should therefore assault the enemy position with a frontal attack and capture Villers Guislain, Pigeon Trench, and the high ground commanding the Canal de St. Quentin and the Hindenburg Line from the West. From our previous experience it was obvious that this attack must be costly; and, delivered as a frontal attack, had not a fair chance of success, whereas this ground could be more easily captured by an assault from the South, and by leaping from one tactical point to another. The attack was launched at 5.30 a.m. with the 98th Brigade on the left still supported by "D" Company, and the 100th Brigade on the right supported by "A" Company, the barrage guns being found from "B" and "C" Companies, with two Companies from the 21st Battalion. No more gallant attack has ever been carried out. Despite the heaviest losses, the Glasgow Highlanders swept down the Targelle Ravine; and some even succeeded in penetrating into Pigeon Trench, where they maintained themselves in action for two whole days, completely cut off from their Battalion. The Worcestershires, although enfiladed on both flanks by well posted machine guns, hurled themselves against the enemy position. Both these Regiments were practically wiped out. Regular lines of dead soldiers, headed by their Officers, testified the whole way down the Valley

to the valour of the troops, and to the courage of the assault. The 98th Brigade met with similar difficulties in Villers Guislain, where from the beginning of the attack they were met on all sides by murderous machine gun fire. Both Brigades were closely supported by Machine Gunners who dashed forward with the foremost waves of the attack to get into action and engage the enemy machine guns who were inflicting such damage in our ranks. 2nd Lieutenant Hunt, of "A" Company, was unfortunately captured at Pigeon Quarry, but the guns of 2nd Lieutenant Harris and Lance-Corporal McGregor did most magnificent work, and as far as it may be said that the attack was successful—its success lying mostly in the gallantry of the attack—Villers Guislain was captured and posts and patrols were pushed out towards Pigeon Trench. Of all battlefields in which the Division has been engaged probably none bear such hideous memories as those of High Wood, Les Boeufs and Targelle Valley. They show the same matchless gallantry, the same failure to carry out an impossible task, and the same protests by the Divisional and Brigade Commanders to the plan of attack.

Meanwhile, the attacks of the 4th Army, accompanied by two American Divisions, and of the 1st Army on the left, had carried well forward; and, at dawn on the 30th, our Division pushing forward discovered that the enemy had evacuated Pigeon Trench; had destroyed the bridges over the Canal; and, having retreated on a wide front, had left only rearguards immediately East of the Canal St. Quentin and occupying the Hindenburg Line. The whole Division was concentrated forward, and attempts were made by patrols of the Middlesex and Cameronians to cross the Canal, but the crossings were stoutly defended by Machine Gunners. On the following day the crossing was effected and the patrols were pushed forward to the Hindenburg Line itself, where, after meeting with slight opposition, they established themselves, and the Division were again concentrated forward, this time East of the Canal.

During the whole of these operations the work of the Pioneers of the Battalion, under Sergeant Sparrow, had been particularly valuable, our troops as against those of the rest of the Division always being housed comfortably and provided with bath rooms. So skilfully and energetically was their work done that, in the Operation Order for the final attack upon the St. Quentin Canal, which took place at dawn, it was ordered that hot baths would be established beside the Canal and be available for "A" Company at 8 a.m. the same day. This, to the amazement of all, was carried out. The highest credit for all this work is due, in particular, to Sergeant Sparrow, Sergeant Milne, Lance-Corporal Daintith, Private Wilf Andrews and Private



THE CANAL DE ST. QUENTIN AND HONNECOURT VILLAGE. (From an Oil Sketch by Lieut.-Col. G. S. Hutchison, D.S.O., M.C.)

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“Fizzer” Smith, the Jack of all trades. The awards gained by the Battalion for this operation were as under:—

- Lieutenant Harris, awarded the Military Cross.
- Lance-Corporal Stephens, awarded the Military Medal.
- Lance-Corporal McGregor, awarded the Military Medal.
- Lance-Corporal Roy, awarded the Military Medal.

2nd Lieutenant (Acting Captain) Dean, D.C.M., was now appointed to command “D” Company having thus risen during the war from Corporal to Major.

Three weeks previous to the termination of these operations, the Commanding Officer had met with a serious riding accident, which had entirely incapacitated him from walking. Such progress as he was able to make in the battle was made in a Trench Cart or with crutches.

On the 5th October, the 38th Division passed through the 33rd Division to follow up the retreating enemy. So rapidly had the enemy retreated, however, that our Division had no time whatever for rest; and on the following day it was again pushed on to Villers Outreaux; and, later in the day, was again pushed on to Clary. The 19th Brigade followed by the rest of the Division, passing through the 38th Division.

The Machine Gun Battalion carried out the advance so rapidly and with such perfect march discipline, that Battalion Headquarters with its flag was actually established beside Clary Village before the “mopping-up” party had reached it. It will be remembered that this village was the first one for a distance of some sixty kilometres Westwards, which had not suffered from shell fire, or from the destructiveness of the Germans; although it may be noted, that it had been looted. It was also the first village in which civilians had been met for a similar number of kilometres. The civilians themselves turned out in the streets waving French flags, and with a gramophone playing the “Marseillaise” as our troops entered it. Of the Village of Clary there are two incidents which are worthy of record. When a cavalry patrol entered the village, the Officer Commanding the patrol was halted by a bearded man attired in dishevelled gear. It was proved that this man, who had been missing since the battle of Le Cateau, in 1914, was a member of this Officer’s regiment. He had lived for four years in a cupboard, sleeping in the underpart of a huge French bed, unsuspected by the enemy, and attended and fed by an old and very poor peasant woman out of her meagre rations. It is placed on record here, also, that the Germans had prepared with explosives the Church which they had trans-

*AUGUST TO OCTOBER, 1918*

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formed into a hospital, fully knowing that we should take it over as such. It was fortunate that this was discovered. During the evening of the day of their retirement from the Village, the enemy heavily shelled it with gas, fully knowing that the civilians, mostly women and children, had nothing with which to protect themselves, and inflicting many casualties amongst them. In such a manner did the Germans continue to make war even up to the end.

By this time the injuries which the Commanding Officer had sustained had become so serious that he was removed to hospital, and Major W. Andrew, M.C., took over command of the Battalion, with Major A. Lomax acting as Second in Command.





A CAMOUFLAGED ROAD. (From a Sketch by  
Lieut.-Col. G. S. Hutchison, D.S.O., M.C.)



GERMAN OFFICERS' GRAVES NEAR MALINCOURT.



TRANSPORT GOING INTO ACTION.





'THE EVENING HATE.' HEAVY GUNS IN PIGEON RAVINE BOMBARDING THE HINDENBURG LINE, WITH BALLOON OBSERVATION. (From an Oil Sketch by *Lieut.-Col. G. S. Hutchison, D.S.O., M.C.*)





## CHAPTER IX.

OCTOBER TO NOVEMBER, 1918.

TROISVILLES—MONTAY—PASSAGE OF THE SELLE RIVER—FOREST—CROIX—  
ENGLEFONTAINE.

The enemy was driven back to the line of the Selle River, our advance being so rapid that he had no time to damage the villages.

The country was admirably suited for defence. Long open undulating country stretched for miles, the bareness being broken only by little villages and occasional clumps of trees. It suited also our cavalry, patrols of which did very fine work until they were withdrawn before the Selle River, owing to the impossibility of crossing, and to the intensity of the enemy shell fire. They succeeded, however, in reconnoitring in advance of our Infantry, and in cutting off numerous field guns and machine guns. The 19th Brigade continued the advance on the 9th October, and outposts were pushed out some distance East of Troisvilles. During these operations "C" Company continued to support the 19th Brigade. The greatest initiative and enterprise was shown by all ranks, and the advance was made rapidly and often independent of the Infantry, or of the support of other arms. Very little opposition was encountered until Bertry had been reached, when field guns and machine guns opened fire, the field guns firing over open sights. Lieutenant Russell's Section seized their opportunity. Two guns were rushed up and opened fire on the German gunners, harassing them, while the Infantry outflanked and captured the field guns.

On the morning of the 10th, the 98th Brigade passed through the 19th Brigade with "B" Company, and carried on the advance until the high ground about Ramboulieux Farm was reached. At this point a stout resistance was put up by the enemy, the shell fire becoming exceedingly intense.

The attack was held up. The cavalry covering our advance suffered severe casualties, and had to be withdrawn, leaving the countryside, and particularly the sunken roads, filled with mangled horses. On the afternoon of the 10th,

the attack was continued, supported by very effective covering fire supplied by the barrage batteries of "A," "B" and "D" Companies. It was, however, only partly successful; and although the line of the River Selle was reached it was not found possible to cross.

It was now obvious that the enemy had decided to defend the natural obstacle formed by the Valley of the Selle. Despite the utter exhaustion of the troops, the Division was again ordered to force the crossing of the Selle and take the high ground to the North-east. The valleys and gullies which cut the slopes of the hill were filled unceasingly with gas, a continued "barrage" being put down by the enemy. Repeated attempts were made to cross the Selle without success, between the 10th and 13th October. On the afternoon of the 11th, the 100th Brigade relieved the 98th, being supported by "D" Company on the left and by "B" Company on the right, both "A" and "C" Companies being held in reserve. At 5 a.m. on the 12th, the 100th Brigade again attempted to continue the advance in what General Baird, who had commanded the Brigade for over two years, described as the most difficult operation which his Brigade had been called upon to undertake. This attack was supported by the direct fire of the thirty-two guns of "B" and "D" Companies. With great gallantry and in the teeth of bitter opposition, the crossings of the River were seized, and the attack carried forward to the Railway Embankment overlooking the River, along which were placed in position very many enemy machine guns. The troops, however, who penetrated beyond the Embankment did so only to be slaughtered. At evening the remnants of a numerically weak Division were withdrawn to the West bank of the Canal, and any further attack postponed until fresh troops could be brought up.

On the afternoon of the 13th, the Division was relieved by the 38th Division, staying for one night at Troisvilles. The relief was most welcome. For four days our troops had been subjected to constant artillery and machine gun fire, and had lived in an atmosphere of gas. The G.O.C., 100th Brigade warmly thanked the Battalion for their assistance during this attack, particularly "B" Company, under Captain Lockhart, as did also Lieutenant-Colonel Menzies, D.S.O., commanding the Glasgow Highlanders.

The rest at Malincourt was short, but was thoroughly enjoyed. Football and Concerts were arranged until the Division moved forward, preparatory to advancing through the 38th Division again. Both "A" and "C" Companies moved off on the 18th and supported the 38th Division with barrage fire. The attack which they covered was successful, the high ground on the East of the Selle being captured. On the 19th the remainder of the Battalion moved up again to Troisville.



"ACTION," (From a sketch in action by  
Lieut.-Col. G. S. Hutchison, D.S.O., M.C.)

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At this date Lieutenant-Colonel J. M. Mood, M.C., arrived and took over command of the Battalion during the absence of Lieutenant-Colonel Hutchison in hospital.

Following the crossing of the Selle River, the Higher Command considered that the time was now ripe for a colossal drive which would break up the German armies and force them to retire to the line of the Meuse. Undoubtedly this would have happened had not the Armistice intervened.

The 33rd Division received orders to cross the Selle River on the night of the 22nd October, and to concentrate with its first line transport East of the River, getting into position ready to attack on the 23rd. The passage of the Selle was an exceedingly difficult and dangerous operation. The enemy was within two miles of the River. The frontage allotted to the Division was little over 1,700 yards long, so that during this night it was necessary to concentrate the whole of the Infantry, with its first line transport, in an area under one square mile, and almost in the outpost line. The risk was great, but no great results can ever be achieved without the taking of great risks. It was fully justified, and was brilliantly conceived and directed by Major-General Sir R. J. Pinney, K.C.B. This concentration was not detected by the enemy. It was an extraordinary sight to see column after column appear in sight on the sky line, creep down the slopes of a hillside, absolutely devoid of vegetation or cover; and, winding their way across the foot and transport bridges constructed by the Royal Engineers reach their positions of assembly. Such shelling as there was, was intermittent and light and the casualties sustained by the Division exceedingly few. The four Companies were bivouacked on the hillside close to Battalion Headquarters at Montay.

At 2 a.m. on the 23rd, the attack was launched with the 98th Brigade on the right and the 19th Brigade on the left, the Infantry being supported by both "B" and "D" Companies. The 18th Division assaulted at the same time on the right, with the 21st Division on the left. The advance, for the first day, was divided into five objectives and covered about seven miles of ground. The bite, however, was too big to be swallowed in one gulp; but before being relieved, the Division was ordered to complete its task and consolidate East of Englefontaine, fighting against increasing opposition, particularly of artillery fire.

By darkness on the 23rd the high ground between Vendegies Wood and Poix du Nord had been consolidated.

"D" Company, in support of the 5th Scottish Rifles who were leading the Brigade, met with no opposition until they had reached Richemont. At this point, information was received from parties returning with prisoners

that the village had been taken. Nos. 2 and 3 Sections therefore moved forward with their limbers, but were met with very heavy machine gun fire from the village. The Senior Officer with these two Sections, Lieutenant McLoughlin, then decided to mop up the village himself. The limbers were moved back under cover, and the Officer, with six men per Section with rifles and bayonets, advanced at the charge to rout out the German rats. As they approached the village they were fired upon from a gateway on the left of the road, one man being hit. The house was immediately surrounded and Sergeant Simons, D.C.M., M.M., with two men, entered the house and called upon the enemy, who were in the cellar, to surrender. They refused to do this, but a bomb rolled down the steps of the cellar very soon altered their opinion and they emerged looking very sorry for themselves. The enemy now opened fire with machine guns upon the doorway of the cottage.

The Section under Lieutenant McLoughlin succeeded in capturing twenty-four prisoners under most interesting circumstances. Immediately they were fired upon by machine guns from the doorway of the cottage the men sheltered against the wall. Lieutenant McLoughlin was unable to move from the wall as he was being sniped at from both sides; but Sergeant Simons who had taken cover under a bush, managed to slip from it and advance up the road with his rifle and commenced sniping. Under cover of this, Lieutenant McLoughlin managed to get away and started a private war on his own. The Section Officer and his Sergeant again met and decided that, as sounds were being heard from the bottom of the house, that they would make further investigation. Accordingly, they rushed to the door and flung down the steps to the cellar two bombs. It was perfectly obvious after this occurrence that the cellar was occupied. A German appeared in the doorway and was immediately fired upon by his friends with the machine gun, and died on the doorstep. Several others came out doing the "Kamerad Trick" and were taken prisoners. In the meantime Lance-Corporal Fraser had been sent out to take up a position with his gun and engage the enemy machine guns in action. He had only gone five minutes when he returned with the remark "Look what I've got," and brought in a gigantic Hun and two sucking pigs; in fact, three pigs. The Section succeeded in capturing twenty-four Huns with the loss of only one man wounded. The machine gun was eventually silenced, Sergeant Walker taking a most active part and displayed reckless gallantry. The Company moved forward when they were again fired at from the cottage which they imagined they had cleared. The cottage was again rounded up and a further bag of twelve Boche was brought out. Some still refused

to surrender, but a tank which was discovered in the neighbourhood was brought into position beside the door, with the nose of its gun looking down the cellar. Four rounds were fired down the cellar which completed the destruction, not only of the Huns within, but of the house.

The advance had carried well forward, the 1st Queen's having gained the first objective, known as the Slaughter House, when the 1st Cameronians advanced through them, gaining the edge of Vendegies Wood by 11 o'clock. The Infantry advanced by sections in easy rushes as if on parade ground. Their advance was covered by well-directed fire from the batteries of our guns. A brief halt was now taken to rest. The enemy resistance had now considerably stiffened and his artillery had become formidable. At 10.30 a.m. the 19th Brigade continued the advance supported by "D" Company. Despite heavy losses, the advance carried forward to the fourth objective. A halt was then called, but the attack was continued at 3.30 p.m. Lieutenant McLoughlin's Section of "D" Company, advancing well in front of the Infantry, continuously opened rapid fire on the machine gun nests which would have held up the Infantry. Meanwhile, "C" Company had moved well forward giving covering fire to the Infantry for each of the first four objectives. On leaving the fourth objective, the Company proceeded independently with its guns limbered up. A large pocket of the enemy had been left in a sunken road just North of Forest, and it opened fire upon "C" Company. The order was given to fix bayonets and charge; and, for the second time amongst the Machine Gunners in this Battalion, in one day, a successful bayonet charge was carried out. A large number of the enemy was killed, whilst thirty-four prisoners, of whom three were Officers and five N.C.O.'s, were taken prisoner, whilst on our side, during this fighting only Lieutenant Bedson and one man were wounded. The booty included two machine guns, two light trench mortars, and a very large number of field glasses and technical stores of all kinds. Their progress was then continued until reaching the neighbourhood of the Slaughter House, when 2nd Lieutenant Smith, seeing that the 19th Brigade was held up, gave it excellent support with direct flanking fire and enabled the Brigade to move forward. The Company on this day was finally disposed to the North by Vendegies Wood, and from this position maintained continuous fire covering the attacks upon the wood.

The conduct of the machine guns up to this stage of the operations had been most admirably conducted. Many very valuable reconnaissances had been carried out by both the Second-in-Command, Major W. Andrew, M.C., and Captain and Adjutant G. Harrison, M.C., enabling not only our guns but the Infantry to advance without serious loss, and to inflict heavy

casualties upon the enemy. Major Andrew, in particular, when the Infantry was held up in front of Vendegies Wood went forward alone into the Wood to discover the position of the hostile machine guns and Infantry, and returned with such an accurate report of their positions that it was possible to bring fire to bear upon them and for our Infantry to advance with very little further resistance. Similarly, also, Captain Harrison mounted to the top of a building, which was at the time under heavy shell fire, and from this position directed the fire of our guns upon the enemy retreating along the roads in rear. Lieutenant-Colonel Mood most admirably co-ordinated the whole scheme of advance.

The 98th Brigade had made equal progress on the right of the Division. The advance of the 18th Division had not proceeded according to plan, and its advance guard was considerably further West than that of the 98th Brigade. The advance was, therefore, carried out with considerable difficulty owing to the right flank of the Division being exposed. Some very valuable work was done to guard this flank by 2nd Lieutenants Bell and Smith of "B" Company. The enemy was found to be in considerable strength at Croix. Lieutenant Coleman, therefore, brought his Section into action in the houses on the outskirts of the village and was supported by the guns of Lieutenant Smith and Lieutenant Bell. The guns were immediately got into action and very good results were obtained against direct targets, a large number of enemy dead being found beside the roads and exits East of Croix. Lieutenant Coleman's Section particularly distinguished itself by destroying a gun team of an enemy field gun and putting the gun out of action, and 2nd Lieutenant Smith succeeded in performing a probably unique feat for small arms by bringing down an observation balloon.

The Battalion Scouts had meanwhile gone forward and obtained excellent news and the enemy was soon reported to be retiring. The Infantry therefore moved forward, the 1st Middlesex and the 2nd Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders leading the advance, whilst "B" Company again formed the defensive flank on the right of our Division. By dusk the North edge of Vendegies Wood had been reached.

At 4 a.m. on the 24th, the 100th Brigade attacked and took Poix du Nord, "A" Company advancing on the right and "C" Company on the left. The attack was a surprise, and the enemy fell back in disorder to the high ground beyond and to the flank of Poix du Nord, before he was able to organize his defence, offering very fine targets to the Machine Gunners, who took full advantage of the situation.

It could now be seen that a determined stand was to be made West







AEROPLANE PHOTOGRAPH SHOWING PART OF  
THE FORÊT DE MORMAL.

of the Forêt de Mormal. The country had now become very closely wooded and thickly dotted with villages. To add to the difficulties from the artillery point of view, the villages were occupied by civilians. A common sight was that of a cart drawn by an ox, bearing away civilian corpses wrapt in white sheets. The civilians, however, soon learnt to remain in their cellars during the fighting and thus casualties were very slight. The enemy was forced from his positions, and soon Poix du Nord was in our hands.

As the advance pursued, the roads became blocked with dead animals and broken-down transport, particularly about Hermies Mill and Paul Jacques Farm. At the latter farm two guns of "B" Company, with Corporal Tweddell and Lance-Corporal McCallum, succeeded in coming into action and silenced the enemy machine guns which were holding up our advance from the high ground about 300 yards in front. Parties of the enemy were seen to run back when the advance was continued; numbers of the enemy were found dead about their guns.

In spite of the exhaustion of all ranks, and the very heavy enemy fire, orders were received that the attack would be continued with Englefontaine as objective. The 100th Brigade, with the 21st Division on the left, advanced from the road through Les Tuilleries and so brought our left flank well forward. About this time, 2nd Lieutenant Cockbain discovered the enemy infiltrating through a gap between the 21st Division and ourselves. He rushed up his guns, and restored the situation in face of very heavy fire. At about 2 a.m. on the 25th, the outskirts of the village were reached after heavy fighting, "A" Company assisting the advance with very effective covering fire. House to house fighting began, culminating in a counter-attack by the enemy in considerable strength, who succeeded in capturing a few posts, only to be driven out again by our assault.

By this time both sides were showing signs of great exhaustion and during the 25th the situation was comparatively quiet. All available guns were brought forward and placed in positions to defend the ground gained and also to assist in the attack of the 19th and 98th Brigades, which was planned for the 26th.

The attack was preceded by a trench mortar bombardment, and was completely successful, 500 prisoners being taken in the village, and our front line carried 200 yards beyond the objective. The 100th Brigade also moved forward and mopped up the village. A patrol of two gun teams of "A" Company with eight men of the 16th King's Royal Rifle Corps capturing sixty-two Boche during the fighting, and rescued twenty civilians from a burning house.

There were extraordinary scenes in Englefontaine immediately the enemy

were driven out. While the prisoners were being collected the inhabitants came out of their cellars and literally fell round the necks of the British troops. Coffee was very freely distributed and general rejoicing took place, whilst hundreds of French flags appeared as from a conjuring hat. These flags we were told had been sold to the inhabitants by the Germans prior to retreat; and again shows the hypocrisy of an enemy who was even willing to sell his much vaunted military honour, patriotism and pride for a small price when defeat overwhelmed him.

During the 26th the line was consolidated and harassing fire directed on the village of Hecq, and Western side of the Forest. In the evening, the Division was relieved by the 38th Division, and moved back to Trois-ville to refit and rest.

During this action casualties in horses and mules exceeded eighty in number, and the drivers suffered heavily also; but the rapidity of the advance could not have been achieved had it not been for the admirable handling of the transport, particularly by Sergeant McGill of "D" Company, and Sergeant Whitlock of "C" Company, and its excellent organization under the Transport Officer.

Towards the end of these operations Major W. Lewthwaite, M.C., was severely wounded whilst gallantly leading the advance of his Company through heavy shell fire.

As the result of these operations the following messages were received:—

*To G.O.C., 33rd Division.*

"G. 434.

"26/10/18.

"Please convey to all ranks under your command my congratulations on the gallantry and endurance they have shown during the recent hard fighting.

"They may well be proud of the advance from Malincourt to the River Selle, where all resistance was overcome until the final objective was gained, and the assault and capture of Englefontaine, with 500 prisoners, after fifty-six hours of continuous heavy fighting and hard marching over most difficult country, was a magnificent piece of work well organized and most gallantly carried out.

"The present nature of fighting was a little new to the Division which made their task harder and more costly, yet in spite of heavy casualties, their plucky determination to win, and splendid soldierlike spirit, carried them through to success.

"Please convey to them my personal thanks for all they have done.

*From G.O.C., Vth Corps."*



"THE SCOUT." FORÊT DE MORMAL. NOV.,  
1918. (From a Painting by Lieut.-Col. G. S.  
Hutchison, D.S.O., M.C.)

[Printed by Waterlow Bros. & Layton, Limited.]



and  
“ To G.O.C., 33rd Division. “ 26/10/18.  
“ The Mairie of Englefontaine, which met this afternoon in a cellar  
“ of this village, begs to express to you in name of the 1,200 inhabitants  
“ freed by the British Army its deepest feelings of hearty gratitude.

“ From O.C., French Mission, 33rd Division.”

and  
“ To O.C., 33rd Battalion Machine Gun Corps. “ 26/10/18.  
“ General Pinney thanks you and all ranks under your command  
“ for your great and successful efforts during the recent operations.”

In his official report upon the conduct of the Battalion in these operations, Lieutenant-Colonel J. M. Mood, M.C., who himself, as 15th Corps Machine Gun Officer, during many months had been in the position of observing the conduct and operations of a large number of Machine Gun Battalions, paid a very high tribute to the efficiency and organization of this Battalion, which he had so successfully commanded during these operations.

Whilst at Troisvilles, Lieutenant-Colonel Hutchison returned from hospital to re-assume command of the Battalion from Lieutenant-Colonel Mood.

The following awards were given for the actions, including the crossing of the Selle River, Montay, Forest, Poix du Nord and Englefontaine :—

DISTINGUISHED SERVICE ORDER.

Major W. C. Andrew, M.C.

MILITARY CROSS.

Major P. Dean, D.C.M. (and Bar).	Lieutenant G. B. Bell.
Major A. Lomax.	Lieutenant G. E. Coleman.
Capt. and Adj. G. Harrison (Bar).	2nd Lieutenant W. Cockbain.
Captain W. Cross.	2nd Lieutenant H. J. Collins.

2nd Lieutenant G. D. Russell.

DISTINGUISHED CONDUCT MEDAL.

Sergeant R. Lewis.	Sergeant R. McGill.
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Sergeant J. Stafford.

MILITARY MEDAL.

Sergeant W. Underhill.	Private J. Rowell.
Sergeant H. Whitlock.	Private J. Skelly.
Sergeant A. B. C. Walker.	Private A. H. Stublely.
Corporal F. G. Clarke.	Signaller E. Smith.
Corporal R. J. Hennedy.	Driver P. S. Lonsdale.

## CHAPTER X.

NOVEMBER, 1918.

### FORÊT DE MORMAL—PASSAGE OF THE SAMBRE RIVER—PETIT MAUBEUGE— THE ARMISTICE, NOVEMBER 11TH, 1918.

A further great drive was then ordered as an operation to be conducted by the 5th Corps, which included the penetration and capture of the Forêt de Mormal, an immense and very thickly planted forest of dense undergrowth, extending from West to East for over seven miles; the passage of the River Sambre; and the capture of the important town of Maubeuge.

The plan of operation was that the 38th Division should assault and capture the village of Hecq and the Western edges of the Forest, which were known to be held in great strength by the enemy; and that the 33rd Division, passing rapidly through the 38th Division should complete the 5th Corps programme.

An enormous number of difficulties presented themselves. For the passage of the Wood one road only was available for transport, and this had been at many points already destroyed by mines and rendered impassable. It was impossible for the Infantry to pass through the greater portion of the Wood owing to the heavy undergrowth, whilst the clearings in the centre of the Forest afforded excellent barriers of defence for the enemy. The bridges over the Sambre River, with the exception of one, had also been blown up by the enemy. It was decided at the outset, in order to avoid the probable heavy gas bombardment of the forest, that the whole of the Machine Gun Battalion with its transport should follow immediately in the wake of the leading Infantry Battalion of the leading Brigade; and, in this position, should advance at least as far as the Eastern edge of the Forêt de Mormal. This bold plan of advance, which it is probable had never been entertained by any other similar Unit, and might have been regarded as foolhardy, as will be seen, proved to have been most wisely decided upon.





CAPT. L. R. HUTCHISON, M.C., TRANSPORT OFFICER.



THE BAND AT THE HEAD OF THE BATTALION MARCHING THROUGH LOCQUIGNOL.



FATHER CHRISTMAS AT BEZENCOURT.



THE C.O. ON "OLD BILL."



On the 3rd November, the 38th Division attacked the strong enemy position on the West of the Forêt de Mormal with the utmost bitterness and violence, killing a very large number of the enemy with the bayonet. The attack of this Division penetrated about three miles inside the wood, as far as the village of Locquignol, which also fell into its hands. As the 38th Division swept forward, the 33rd Division was concentrated closely behind its advance; and, on the evening of this day, the whole of the Division was bivouacked amongst the trees of the Forest. Considerable shelling took place, but the fire of the German Gunners showed only the inaccuracy and wildness of exasperation, and inflicted very few casualties amongst our troops. The enemy himself had suffered very heavy casualties both in the village of Hecq and in the Forest where rows and rows of enemy dead were found piled behind the fallen tree trunks or slit trenches, for the most part bayoneted. Our own casualties during the attack had been exceedingly light. On the morning of the 5th November, the 33rd Division passed on to the attack and made very rapid progress. Despite the congestion of traffic on the road and in the drives, the enormous craters which had been blown, and the obstacles formed by fallen trees across them, the Machine Gunners were able, owing to the excellent direction of the transport under Lieutenants Arnott and McLoughlin, to keep pace with the Infantry. On reaching the Eastern side of the wood, the rapidity of the advance was checked by enemy rear guards which were still clinging to the villages of Sarbaras and Berlaimont in particular.

Admirable reconnaissance work was done by the Scouts under Sergeant Taylor; and "A" and "B" Companies under Majors Stentiford and Lomax, respectively, immediately got into action, and by giving excellent and accurate covering fire, where no artillery was available, enabled the 100th Brigade to continue the advance as far as the Sambre River itself.

The Signallers, also, under Lieutenant W. B. Harris, with the No. 5 Signal Section of the Divisional Signal Company showed great enterprise and initiative in maintaining communication under most difficult circumstances. Telephones were out of the question; but Lucas lamps in the tops of houses or set in trees, amplified by a system of Mounted Orderlies, enabled orders for changes in disposition to be given most easily; and the highest credit is due to the Signallers, who, although very weak in numbers, worked unremittingly and without relief during the whole of the advance.

The 98th Brigade now pushed through the 100th Brigade and took up the pursuit. The enemy had retired to the high ground on the Eastern side of the Sambre River, destroying, after his passage of the River, the only bridge remaining. The river itself was unfordable; and the enemy

directed upon it, and in particular upon the ruined bridge-heads, a very intense fire from machine guns, and field guns and howitzers. Despite this fact, however, it was decided that the 98th Brigade should force the passage of the Sambre River. The crossing of the river was carried out mainly owing to the enterprise and gallantry of the 1st Middlesex Regiment, and is best described in a report written by Captain F. C. Booth, V.C., D.C.M., of the "Die-Hards." :—

"On the 5th November, 1918, the 33rd Division were fighting an Advance Guard action moving towards the Village of Berlaimont on the bank of the River Sambre. Having captured the village it became necessary to cross the River Sambre to follow up the retiring enemy. The Germans destroyed all bridges and were strongly entrenched on the opposite bank of the River, thereby making further advance impossible until the river crossings were re-established, or bridges rebuilt.

"The Division was being led by the 1st Battalion Middlesex Regiment, under Lieutenant-Colonel D. C. Owen, D.S.O., with whom was co-operating the 33rd Battalion Machine Gun Corps. The advance through the Forêt de Mormal during the early part of the 4th instant had been very rapid and the Machine Gun Corps in this action proved that their system of transport was so efficient, that, notwithstanding the fact that the Infantry had advanced almost as quickly as the men could march, when the front line was actually checked and held up near the river bank, the machine guns came into action immediately. It is doubtful whether, under the old system of fighting, the machine guns with the Infantry Battalion, this could have been achieved.

"The ground sloped sharply down for about a mile to the river bank and in full view of the enemy, entrenched in the opposite bank. Had the advance continued, we must have lost heavily. Instead of which, a Section of machine guns was brought into action in the front line itself. This engaged the enemy trenches at a range of 1,800 yards; and, under cover of this fire, our patrols were able to work their way down to the river bank and thoroughly reconnoitre with a view to rebuilding the bridges. This conclusively illustrates the importance of the principle of always having the machine guns well forward in an advance guard action; more especially when the enemy are fighting a rear guard action, and must be pressed with all possible speed. In this case, had not these machine guns been up with the advance line, considerable time and probably many more lives would have been wasted in performing the necessary reconnaissance.

“Subsequently two machine guns worked their way down to the river bank itself and also engaged the enemy trenches on the opposite bank. The whole of the Machine Gunners were in action on the enemy trenches early; and they kept up such an accurate fire that the Infantry were able to choose their spot for building the bridge, and even to dump a large portion of the material required near the spot. At dusk the enemy had become so demoralized in his trenches from our machine gun fire, and sniping, assisted by a certain amount of Artillery, that we were able to push our first bridge across the river, which was unfordable, and establish a crossing.

“It will be interesting to note that this bridge was built by “B” Company, 1st Middlesex Regiment, entirely by untrained men under the supervision of a Sapper Officer, and that all the material used was found in Berlaimont Village by the Officers and men of the 1st Middlesex. This was indeed a very creditable performance. The whole 98th Brigade crossed by this one bridge and established a footing on the opposite side capturing many prisoners, guns, &c.

“The 1st Middlesex were the first over the river when the Brigades on the left and right were held up. The success of the action was very greatly due to the co-operation between the Infantry and the Machine Gun Corps. It was not an action which ‘Came off by chance.’ The Machine Gunners were the whole time in closest liaison with Lieutenant-Colonel Owen, and the dispositions of the guns were made in accordance with his requirements. This action proved how the Infantry and Machine Gun Corps can help one another and how the best results are obtained by co-operation.

“The action was a great success and casualties were practically nil. The 33rd Battalion Machine Gun Corps worked splendidly throughout these operations, thoroughly upholding the traditions of the British Army and adding another glorious victory to their splendid record.

“Their Commanding Officer should be a very proud man.”

Both the Village of Berlaimont and the passage of the Sambre River having been captured by the valour of the Middlesex Regiment, with Major Dean's Company co-operating, the 98th Brigade swept on through Aulnoye, a small manufacturing town which had suffered considerably at the enemy's hands, towards Petit Maubeuge. The 19th Brigade, with “A” Company, under Major Stentiford, M.C., passed through the 98th Brigade at Aulnoye and carried forward the advance to the Village of Petit Maubeuge, inclusive, when the 38th Division again took up the pursuit.

Considerable opposition was met with again near Petit Maubeuge, whilst, owing to the rapidity of the advance, several pockets of the enemy had been left undetected by our patrols and caused us several casualties. After the relief of the 19th Brigade by the 38th Division, Major Stentiford's Company was left in the battle to cover the concentration of the 38th Division for a further advance next day. The conduct of this Company with another Division was most admirable and evoked from its Major-General a glowing message of congratulation to the 33rd Divisional Staff.

On the 9th November the Division was withdrawn from the battle to the Berlaimont area, the 33rd Battalion Machine Gun Corps being billeted in the town of Aulnoye. Early on this day, it was strongly rumoured that the enemy had sent over plenipotentiaries to Maréchal Foch pleading for an armistice. This was officially confirmed at 12 noon, stating that Maréchal Foch had agreed to an armistice under very severe conditions to the enemy, and that he must accept or continue the fighting by 12 noon on the 11th. The excitement, both amongst the British soldiers and the civilians, was intense. It was immediately decided by this Battalion to open an immense one franc sweepstake on the result; and a deserted shop was taken over for this purpose. Subscriptions poured in, both from our own men, and those of the Welsh Division; and shortly before 11 o'clock on the 11th it was announced that the enemy had accepted the terms, and over 1,500 francs were paid out as the result of the sweepstake to Private Diamond of "A" Company.

With characteristic promptness it was, again, immediately decided to celebrate the event in an equally characteristic and original manner. At 12 noon, the hour of the armistice, the Band turned out in the streets of Aulnoye in full war paint, and, preceded by a peal of bells, marched through the streets of the town playing three soul-stirring marches, and ending in the square with "La Marseillaise" and the National Anthem.

An enormous crowd of soldiers and civilians thronged the streets and hung from the windows, cheering and waving flags, whilst the Maire of the town presented a bouquet of flowers to the Bandmaster and hung a garland of roses round the neck of the Commanding Officer. At 7 o'clock the same evening, a torchlight procession, forty torches on 12-foot poles having been provided at a moment's notice by our energetic Pioneers, was organized through the town, ending at the old German Officers' Club in the Square, in front of which an enormous bonfire had been built and a stage for an impromptu concert erected. The progress of the Band, through even greater crowds than during the morning, was preceded by volleys of Verey Lights of every known colour being fired into the air. The bonfire burned so

fiercely that the A.P.M. turned out from his comfortable billet at night to see if the town was on fire, whilst other Staff Officers imagined that a huge German dump had gone up! The Concert was a "howling" success! For several days the Battalion lay at Aulnoye; and finally marched back to Malincourt over the line of its old advance and battlefields, where it rested for about three weeks in a very comfortable deserted village. Sports and Concerts of all kinds were arranged, whilst the C.O., in his inimitable manner, lectured on the horrors of demobilization.

A Race Meeting was arranged at a moment's notice.

Suddenly appeared a glaring poster announcing the Malincourt Autumn Meeting. The excitement was intense, Officers were selling souvenirs, and men were "flogging" kit to raise money for the great day.

The day arrived, November 23rd, an ideal racing day with just that tinge of frost that sends the blood rushing to one's cheeks. The Transport Officers and N.C.O.'s were unblushingly giving false tips in answer to the eager enquiries of anxious Subs, and desperate Other Ranks; in fact, the Transport were out to make money, and make money they did!

As on all big race days, rumours were floating about and such questions as these had to be answered by those in the know. "Is it true that Gipsy has not eaten her feed?" "Was Koko to be kept back for something bigger?" "Has Dunny really got spring heels?" "If I back one each way does it mean that my money is on it going down and coming up?"

One race contained such famous old veterans as Shanks, Pongo, Snowball and Lemberg. Shanks was an easy favourite, followed closely by Pongo, but it was noised abroad that Pongo had been on duty all the morning so the money was put on Shanks. Just before the start we saw a jockey running round like a spare file, looking for his mount, Sammy. Sammy was not to be found. At this moment an enterprising Transport Sergeant pushed forward his mare Diabolo, which was entered on the spot as being the bay gelding, Sammy. The horses moved slowly down the Course, and after knowing winks had been exchanged, the Transport Officers and Sergeants moved unconcernedly towards the Totalizator and entered the last bets of the race on Sammy.

It was a perfect start and a perfect procession, one beautiful animal suddenly sprang forward, said "Good-bye-ee" to the remainder, and came home alone. It was not until the Totalizator had paid eight to one that the ugly rumour arose that the Transport Sergeants and the jockey, "Four-flush Harris," had tricked the crowd. This caused a great disturbance, but the notes were lying snugly in the pockets of the tricksters.

At 3 p.m. the Malincourt Helter-Skelter was run. Twenty-eight mules went unwillingly down to the post. As they were all called "Charlie," the jockies were backed. It was not what one could call a perfect start, but some of them got away all right and a very exciting race was fought by Driver Hopkins, Foers and Marshall; Hopkins winning by a short head. Apparently Hopkins was well known, for the Totalizator could only produce even money.

Then came the Chariot Race. The mules were now at their right game and suddenly took a great interest in the proceedings. The "Boadiceas" were judged, first prize going to Driver Barber, who was brilliantly attired in a "scrounged" episcopal robe.

The tape dropped, "B" Company's Chariot was away, going in great style back to their stables. They crossed the path of "C" Company, unsaddling the wheel driver, who finished mixed up in the wheels of the chariot. The mules started to be playful, broke the traces, and galloped madly back to Malincourt. Whilst this was going on, "D" Company were galloping on the right course, followed by "A." "B" Company, having got their mules to listen to reason, took up the pursuit, finishing second, a dead-heat with "A"; "D" Company winning. And so we come to the end of an exciting Meeting, the Gunners sorrowfully wending their way back to billets, wiser in the head, but empty of pocket, swearing vengeance on the smiling transport who were richer by several hundred francs.

On December 10th, the Battalion began its long march back across the old battlefields to the Hornoy area, West of Amiens. The weather up to this time had been fine for several weeks, but no sooner was the march commenced than it commenced to pour with rain. The march, which lasted nine days, passed through Masnieres, Beaumetz, Le Sars and Poizieres, now only recognisable by sign boards; Le Butte de Warlincourt, Albert; through Querrieu, the old Headquarters of the 4th Army in 1916, Amiens, Picquigny, and finally to billet in the three ramshackle little villages of Bezencourt, Guibermesnil and La Boissiere.

Immediately, preparations were undertaken for Christmas and Hogmannay festivities. On the 25th December, sixty-four mules were hooked into the Boche wagon, which we had captured at Englefontaine; and with R.Q.M.S. Scott attired to represent Father Christmas, and a huge pine tree, strutted into the centre of the cart, the wagon was driven through the villages which we occupied, whilst Father Christmas distributed presents, which had been bought previously in Amiens, to the children, amidst the wildest excitement.

For a whole week festivities of all kinds raged. Football matches,



*NOVEMBER, 1918*

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dinners, whist drives, concerts, amongst which, noteworthy and the best was, undoubtedly, the "At Home" at Battalion Headquarters, to which we invited all Warrant Officers and Sergeants.

A final inspection of the Battalion was held by General Pinney, as usual in pouring rain; and the curtain was rung down on the Battalion by the first allotment for the demobilization of 103 men of the veterans of the Battalion, whilst the rest of the Battalion was split up and proceeded to march to the Base Camps at Rouen, Dieppe, Havre and Abancourt, where they were to be speedily demobilized, whilst filling in the time by guarding German prisoners.

## CHAPTER XI.

### A PILGRIM'S PROGRESS.

*Beinge Extracts from ye Diarie of a Musketeer during ye Great War*  
(with *beaucoup* apologies to SAMUEL PEPYS).

*August 5th, 1914.* Hearing that ye King and ye women and children of England are in dire need of men, to withstand and defeat ye onslaught of ye knavish Hun, who has fell designs on our hearths and homes and liberties, I have this daye straightwaye presented myselfe to ye Military as a right goode champion of ye cause.

Not without some misgivings either—for ye legs of me are not without some suspect, as things of beautie, and my verie stomach has distinct views as to what shall be dumped therein.

However, ye Officer before whom I swore ye Oath of Allegiance to “ye King, his Heirs and Successors”—which looks to cover a mightie long period—was righte pleased to see me, though he opined that “ye crisis was not yet as bad as all that,” the which, hym being a humorous fellow, I take to mean that I am fit more as a “Forlorn Hope” than a file of ye Vanguard.

*August 6th, 1914.* Rose earlie—for a lark—and to my Tailor, whom I did paye—honour bright! He was surprised “some.” Taking several fond farewells of my wife and our progeny, did hie me to Winchester, a right goode citie, sayed by some to be “Ecclesiastically damned.”

Arriving at ye Barracks, found that a faithfull description of myself had preceded me, for they straightwaye gave me a knife and fork, which was mightie fearsome, suggesting that I was to be fatted up for killing.

Did not know until this daye that one could bathe with so small a modicum of water.

*August 7th, 1914.* Was aroused this morn at a mightie earlie hour by a good soldier's performance on his Trumpet, which annoyed me, and



"THE MUSKETEER." (From a Painting by  
Lieut.-Col. G. S. Hutchison, D.S.O., M.C.)

(Printed by Waterlow Bros. & Layton, Limited.)



left me wondering who called *hym*. Notwithstanding and remembering the date, I put head out o' window and wished hym ye compliments of ye Season, to which ye goode fellow replied in one word in plural, methinks—which seemyth to bear reference to divers nethers, but is notte yet in my vocabulary.

*October 9th, 1914.* Having been much put about by sundry bigger men than myself—with some authoritie, real or imaginary—I have this day arrived at ye Wimbledon Camp, and straightwaye obtained four days leave of absence for ye adjustment of my Business affairs.

Ye red-necked Sergeant-Major opined that I had made a “bloodye fine start”—and in verie truth I thought so too, but since he did not seem of a docile demeanour, I held my peace, and straightwaye proceeded, first to show the wife of my bosom a soldier, then to my Firm who sayed my appearance was verie becoming.

What it was then becoming, I know notte, but I imagine it has since deviated somewhat from its original path.

*June 10th, 1915.* Being of a bloodye disposition, and pining to slaye Huns by ye pyle and not singly, did this day hie me to ye Hythe Camp, to be made proficient in ye use of an unholy weapon, perpetrated by one Vickers. Having performed wonders with ye rifle and revolver—being able to slash ye eyelash off a bug at twenty paces—was told this daye that a future lie before me. Coming from a N.C.O. this coulde not welle but be true—and I do not well see how ye future lie behind me.

*October 26th, 1915.* Having had a right good time at Hythe, and having secured seventy-five points of eighty going—modesty preventing me taking ye other five—I this day proceeded to ye Base Depot in France, where it doth seem “ye young contend, while ye olde (sweats) survey.

*November 2nd, 1915.* Was this day subjected to a certain scrutiny by ye Apothecary, who seemed well pleased with my anatomy, though I was feeling exceeding sore the while following the involuntary gyrations and mountebank tricks I had, perforce, undergone.

*May 6th, 1916.* Did this day travel “some,” by train, and by my poor feet, and was right glad at ye end of ye journey to meet ye Com-mandyng Officer of ye “Olde Hundredth” Company, which name, in verie truth, has not the remotest connection with ye Psalter as used in ye Orthodox Church.

## A PILGRIM'S PROGRESS

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He did survey me in a manner like unto that which horse-dealers are wont to employ when making a dubious bargain, and he verie kindly asked if I wished to stay with hym, and did also straight-way inform me as to what he would require of me.

Having no succour I did assent to all that he said, and so to bed to think it over.

*June 6th, 1916.* Did this day form a distant acquaintance with ye Hun—who seemyth to be a profligate in the matter of his metals, flinging them broadcast to no purpose whatever, except that it was mighty inconvenient, causing me to perform more curtesies than enough.

*September 12th, 1916.* Was removed by ye Apothecary from ye Military duties having a mightie bad attack of rheumatics, or such like.

*March 22nd, 1918.* Being now rid of my malady, did seek and find my Commandynge Officer and all hys trusty henchmen, in a new place and in a new guise.

Egad! they had been mightie busy in my absence, not least in ye matter of altering their badges of Office.

Ye Colonel had shed his Glengarry, resulting in my failure to recognise him.

Not so he, for he at once hailed me by name, and bid me a righte goode daye—and straightwaye did make of me an amanuensis.

*April 11th, 1917.* Proceeded this daye to a new quarter, to stem ye tide of ye bloodye Hun—who seemyth not to have reckoned with ye 33rd Machine Gunners—though on the way our train did inadvertently run into one of his missiles to the confusion of some thirty poor souls—whom God rest—and it required some fortitude to view ye result of hys handiwork.

Did go astray from ye column, but was gathered up at midnight by two of our trusty scouts who carried me to ye haven of our Headquarters, some 1,000 yards from ye Hun—and so to bed on a heap of ye mangel wurzel which did stink “some.”

*April 13th, 1918.* Ye Hun, having apparently singled me out as ye recipient of a souvenir which I like not, was right glad when “for strategic reasons” we did hie us to ye rear, in order to slay ye Huns ye better on some later daye.

*May 3rd, 1918.* Arrived this daye for a sojourn in ye Boone Camp.

*A PILGRIM'S PROGRESS*

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*May 13th, 1918.* This is now a right goode Camp, and to-day a Band arrived, with "scruffy" instruments to serenade ye Colonel, who was mightie pleased and straightway gave them new instruments which make a big showe.

By their verie skilful rendition of some Scotch airs, which some Entrepreneur had superimposed upon highly syncopated music of a more modern type and called it "Ye March Past"—they did greatly delight ye Colonel, who, as a mark of approbation, did saye he would fill all their instruments with gold. At which ye poor little piccolo player was exceeding sore, for hys instrument would hold ye verie least.

However, their triumph was but short-lived for ye following daye they did give a right "scruffy" exhibition and ye Colonel—who well knows how to be exceeding wrath—did say that he would dispose of their instruments in quite a different manner, at which ye poor little piccolo player, again bemoaned hys lot, for hys was ye only instrument that could attempt ye passage with any hope of success!

*May 17th, 1918.* Weather and Boche permitting, we did this day hold sports, and right lusty are ye lads who contend. Was mightie interested in ye fisticuffs, but held my peace, lest I should be invited to a form of exercise at which they might, peradventure, prove my superior.

*May 22nd, 1918.* Our right goode lads did this night further indulge their sporting proclivities by shooting to ye earth one of ye Hun airmen, who had reckoned notte with their prowess—and sundry of my comrades did rush pell mell across country in ye nude to view ye quarry. Ye arrival of some buxom wenches, on ye same errand, cut short this private view, and they did one and all skidaddle with alacrity and some danger to their anatomy.

*August 11th, 1918.* Did this day proceed home on leave to see ye wife of my bosom, who was too surprised to say all she felt.

*August 31st, 1918.* Did arrive back with my Unit—too full for words.

*November 11th, 1918.* Ye jolly olde Boche having been on ye run for a long time, has now given up ye ghost, which we did celebrate with a readiness and completeness which staggered ye good citizens of Aulnoye.

*December 18th, 1918.* Did arrive at Bezencourt there to cogitate upon ye prospects of Demobilization, also to take stock of our accoutrements—a mightie interesting pursuit.

## A PILGRIM'S PROGRESS

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*January 2nd, 1919.* Have spent a right good Yuletide and ye Festival of ye Hogmannay, in goodlie fashion.

Right well did we regale ourselves in ye quaint Chateau of Bezencourt, and we did drink toasts with little or no provocation. A scion did hie him to buy flesh, dead or alive, and did secure six live swine, which are exceeding toothsome.

But ye knave had anticipated Xmas by some hours, and taking advantage of his comatose condition, ye knowinge beasts did escape and scatter to ye four winds of heaven—only to be caught again by our ubiquitous Scouts and devoured in due course.

At ye repast, ye Colonel did make a short speech, retrospective in character—though it was verie evident that he had to leave manie thyngs unsayed, which he could not trust himself to saye.

*January 15th, 1919.* Did this daye enter upon ye final stage of our long march from ye fighting area—for ye which God be praised.

### YE STORMING OF ROUEN.

Approaching ye ancient Citie of Rouen, ye Commandynge Officer and ye Assistant Adjutant rode on in front, and being ye first fighting troops to enter ye Citie, caused much ado—and speculation was rife as to ye identity of these gay cavaliers. Ye Assistant Adjutant was seen to close his right eye on at least three occasions—but whether this was ye better to get ye beautiful facade of ye Cathedral in alignment, or due to ye close proximity of some buxom wenches, our Sisters-in-Arms—ye W.A.A.C.'s to wit—is not clear to me, who am quite unsophisticated in these matters. But I did suspect that ye appearance of ye comely maidens, found his approving eye hard put to it—for he straightwaye galloped back to ye following legions—which were headed by ye only possible Band in Creation—and in ye vernacular they most like, ordered them to “put a jerk into it” and make a triumphant entry, ye which they did in right goode style, producing a scene of enthusiasm and excitement which will endure for all time in our Booke of Memorie.

Our goode lads marched down ye Rue Jeanne d'Arc holding up all traffic and upsetting horses—and ye men who have hibernated here for four years, wot not whence we came or whom we were.

Finding ourselves dumped in a sequestered camp, without ye confines of ye Citie—with ye Chinks on one side and Hun prisoners on ye other—we opined that it was neither to our liking or befitting such lusty troops as ye 33rd.



## A PILGRIM'S PROGRESS

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*January 16th, 1919.* So this day we straightway decided to liven up ye goode citizens of Rouen—whether they would or not. As is ye custom in ye 33rd Machine Gun Battalion, everything was decided in a few minutes, and our ubiquitous Assistant Adjutant, with characteristic “nerve,” dashes into ye Citie and warns all ye newspapers that ye most famous Band on God’s earth will parade in ye main streets and thoroughfares on Sunday, and, moreover, that they would perform on ye following Wednesday in ye Theatre des Arts—though whether ye noble edifice is available he knoweth not.

*January 17th, 1919.* Instead of plunging into ye vortex of ye gay life of Rouen—Heaven bless these virtuous souls—ye Commandynge Officer and again his wily Assistant Adjutant enter upon a pilgrimage to secure the Theatre and map out ye route for ye Band on Sunday—ye which task would seem to have provided a convenient avenue for more entertainment than enough.

*January 19th, 1919.* This day being Sunday the Band did keep the tryst with ye goode people of Rouen and played outside ye Palais de Justice. On ye first sounds of their approach did thousands of people march through ye streets, in many cases completing a hazardous toilette en route—and I would fain look me ye other way.

*January 20th, 1919.* Ye written permission for ye Theatre even yet not in his possession, ye canny Assistant Adjutant visits ye Theatre des Arts and takes over with a lot of ceremony.

He will not divulge to a soul ye precise extent and nature of his artifice to secure this end, but methinks he made more engagements with Mademoiselle than he can ever fulfill. Ye theatre obtained, he betook himself on a quest for native artistes and after ye manner of a prestidigitative, possessed himself of ye address of ye French prima donna, and accompanied by a brother criminal, who speaks ye language fluently, made ye bee line for her maison. After performing all ye usual courtesies, as practised in France—some of ye which leave me high dry—they discovered that ye faire laydie speaks fluent English, and this provided ye loquacious Assistant Adjutant with ye opportunity of his life. Before one could say “Knife” he had convinced my Laydie Mdme. Gavelle, that he knew of her triumph in London, how beautiful she is, and her beautiful voice—and furthermore, he did on his bended knee, beg ye honour of playing just one song over for her on ye piano—*tout de suit*—to which my Laydie, now thoroughly captivated, consented,

## A PILGRIM'S PROGRESS

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after which ye Assistant Adjutant straightway arranged that a car do call for my Laydie and also bring her home again.

*January 21st, 1919.* Tuesday, with all and sundry sweating blood.

All manner of schemes formulated—and abandoned. Ye owner of ye Theatre demands written permission of ye Authorities straightway, and on a telephonic promise of ye same within two hours, ye arrangements continue—though howbeit ye Assistant Adjutant knoweth notte ye means to this end.

*January 22nd, 1919.* Der Tag! Our G.S. wagon arrives at ye Theatre loaded with Souvenir Calendars—a side line—and to ye confusion of ye Assistant Adjutant, he finds ye stage unprepared and no coal for heating arrangements. Howsoever, he obtains ye wherewithal in French labour and our coal.

Methinks even I had forebodings of ye excitement and merriment that ye evening promised, for I found my decorous self plotting with a certain Corporal—of comely shape and appearance—to evade ye crowd of comrades, in order that we might ye more advantageously ensconce ourselves among ye alluring W.A.A.C.'s and other auxiliary Forces of ye feminine gender. But, as is usually ye fate of such designs, we did find, on taking our seats, that we were right well flanked and buttressed by dam-sells of some forty summers—and winters—ye which in verie truth, cooled our ardour somewhat.

I never had a piece of toast, particularly long—and wide,  
But dropt upon ye sanded floor—and always on ye buttered side!

Ye curtain rose, revealing our Band, who, before one could digest ye new setting here portrayed, commenced their opening selection—and one and all at once came under their influence; for, in verie truth, they did combine real merit, with stage effect, as to ye manner born.

Their rendering of "Poet and Peasant" was something to be remembered. Ye bandmaster was a revelation to each one of us. Of a truth ye evening was now old; but it did seem to me that he had dipped his hands in a flour bag—for I am certain he would not suffer white gloves—and ye manner in which he slashed off large portions, small slices and ye "twiddly bits" of ye musicke, disposing of them irrevocably into the air, was a source of admiration to all.

And so to bed, having in verie truth spent a right memorable day.

*February 4th, 1919.* Ye curtain falls on ye last act, and ye lads have hied them to their homes, leaving but me and ye Cadre to be ye sport of ye General Staff.

Ye Colonel has been, in my humble judgements, a Commandynge Officer who commands success in any circumstance of war, as his and ye Battalion's recorde doth showe. Forcible in character, and quicklie appreciative of ye needs of ye moment, he has been more than a match for ye slow-thinkyng Hun—and it is almost a matter of some regret that ye need for his great qualities as a soldier should evaporate, while he is even yet at ye zenith of his powers and fame. Admired by all, and loved by most of his men, to whom he is at all times accessible, and always a stickler for ye honour and integrity of ye Battalion, it would, methinks, have been unnatural to exclude this eulogy from my Diary—though I well know, that having uttered ye same, I have rendered my writings an unsaleable commodity—for I shall at once be voted a tyme-serving individual, doing lip-service, of which there be many in these days.

For myself, I am glad to have had ye opportunity which ye war has given, for a larger and more comprehensive knowledge of men—and notte least for a few lessons in ye virtue of self-abnegation—ye which, though not apparent in some, doth abound right and left. Having said which, I will damm ye babbling brook.

E. F. L.

## CHAPTER XII.

### RETROSPECT.

If nothing else, the record of our Machine Gun Units shows continued progress. There has never been any looking back. We can trace the inspiration and definite growth of the Machine Gun Battalion even many months before official sanction actually permitted its formation. We can perceive, equally, success growing upon success with each step up to the final welding of the Machine Gun Companies into a Battalion.

The fire power of the machine guns became with each stage of its growth a greater factor in Victory, and in minimising the losses of the Infantry. The 33rd Battalion was always in the vanguard of Machine Gun thought, and demonstrated this thought in action. We have every cause to be proud of our achievements, of the example we have set and of our success.

This book cannot justly be closed without reference to those whose duties mainly lay behind the battle front, but who contributed so largely to our share of success.

Which brings us to our Domestic and Interior Economy. We have been particularly fortunate in the matter of our Pioneers, who, under Sergeant Sparrow, D.C.M., have shown themselves to be past-masters in the art of improvisation and of skilled work.

Under their hands we have been accustomed to see habitable cantonments spring up on bare fields almost like mushrooms in a single night and replete with every convenience. However adverse the conditions of weather, or of intermittent shell fire, their work has been executed deliberately and in no uncertain fashion.

At Boone Camp, near Ypres, the Commanding Officer said one Friday afternoon that Divine Service would be held the following Sunday in a Church! and the neat little edifice, seating 150, and now standing there, was forthwith reared in one and a half days by these super-workmen.

As if in flat contradiction to the cavillers who consider that all "employed" men are on "soft" jobs, Sergeant Sparrow ended his military career by

## RETROSPECT

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getting wounded at Troisvilles in October—the clumsiest thing he ever did! thus eliminating from our strength an N.C.O. of that persevering type which has had not a little to do with the Huns' undoing.

It is needless to emphasise that with sixty-four Vickers Guns in action, together with their manifold gear and appliances, our Artificers have never had much opportunity to doze. One and all they seem to have been gifted with second sight when diagnosing the trouble in a particular gun's entrails. During the Villers Guislain period, they passed thirty guns through their hands in four days, which was of inestimable value to our part of the operations, and we can call to mind no occasion on which our efforts have been nullified because of a depleted establishment in guns.

They are perfect wizards in the handling of metals, and it has occurred to us more than once how profitably their skill might have been utilized in the fashioning of trinkets from shell cases were it not for the numerous G.R.O.'s that of course rendered such practices taboo!

One unhappy "five-eight" did attempt the transport to U.K. of certain metallurgical specimens of their handiwork, which he elected to conceal in his trousers. But it gave him such a pronounced tendency to embonpoint—not usually associated with Machine Gunners—that he was detected and returned to his Unit forthwith, a sadder though "flier" man.

Our Tailors, too, though they have generally "got the needle," have plied their trade to the complete satisfaction of the "square pusher" and the "pukka" N.C.O. For the consideration of a mere trifle they have always been prepared to place sufficiently high the first stripe of the Lance-jack, who, Micawber like, "confidently expected something to turn up" in the shape of two more. But "the best laid schemes of mice and men oft gang agly" and the "something" occasionally turned up in the person of the C.O. with a scarcely veiled reference to "reversion" or something of the kind.

Lance-Corporal Lockett is to be congratulated upon the patience and zeal he has extracted from his men in the pursuance of an occupation where the closest application is essential, however trying the situation. He had unbounded faith in the prowess of our men—for no shower of decorations has ever been precipitated which found him without the requisite quantity, and variety, of Ribbons.

This Battalion, and those of it from the "Old Hundredth," have been a "mobile" column for nearly two years, and it would be interesting, though perhaps impossible, to compute the numbers of miles our men have marched during that time. It will therefore be readily seen that the Shoemakers' Department is one of extreme importance—and this has been most ably conducted by Corporal O'Reilly, who, though comparisons and par-

## RETROSPECT

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ticularising are odious where all have served well, has been ably assisted in turn by that consistent and hardworking veteran Ted Shenton.

This Departmental survey would be sadly incomplete if we omitted mention of Lance-Corporal Boothby, the custodian of our four water carts. In and out of the line he has prosecuted his duties of furnishing water of the requisite hygienic standard for our lads in all manner of nerve-racking conditions, with an industry and devotion to duty that was ever an example to the less virile. Often enough water had to be decanted from the cart into petrol tins, a considerable distance from the trenches; but the most isolated group of gun teams could always depend upon their share of "Adam's Wine." As a Machine Gunner once pathetically remarked: "If we were only as sure of the Rum!"

Lance-Corporal Boothby's unerring discharge of these absolutely essential duties in the vilest of weathers aroused the deepest admiration in everyone. He had, we believe, a religion all his own. At least, we are certain his four water carts were his idols.

A most serious menace to the health and well-being of our lads has been the gipsy life they have led, continually taking over the ground hurriedly evacuated by the enemy—whose casualties are well known—or possibly by our own troops. Frequently the only possible strategic pitch has been one grossly unsanitary and, therefore, conducive to all kinds of maladies. Lance-Corporal Boyd and his men have been indispensable for the thoroughness with which they always attacked these spots, and thanks to him our second day on new ground always found us replete with every hygienic contrivance. This is more meritorious when one considers the difficulties of obtaining material, and the fact that a less energetic discharge of these disagreeable duties might conceivably have passed muster.

The mule and all connected therewith is, we fear, a hobby which has been ridden to death; but since our animals' strength was over 230, it will be seen that keeping them shod was no child's play. Sergeant Underhill, M.M., his men, and our mules, we are glad to say, thoroughly understood one another, for we have seen, many a time, the affirmative and the negative of their arguments wax equally hot. The Sergeant has, we know, spent some time in India; and we fancy, habitually addressed the mules in Urdu. Anyhow, we found our vocabulary lacking in most of his terms of endearment. He is a man with great equanimity of mind and "some" acrobat, who can shoe a mule with 9.2's bursting in the vicinity and "feeds up" imminent.

Of the Commissariat it is needless to say more than that it was the only department in which the C.O. was never angry. He, it is a pleasure

to recall, had unbounded confidence in its ability to furnish whatever might be demanded in the way of rations, clothing, guns, ammunition and all the manifold gear appertaining to a Machine Gun Battalion. We must not forget that the efficiency and discipline of the Battalion have been in a large way attributable to R.S.M. A. Kiddie, M.C., D.C.M., who not only proved that his bark was considerably worse than his bite, but also in a quiet, unobtrusive manner, that his fatherliness off parade was his most powerful weapon.

When the idea of this Historical Record of the Battalion was first mooted, we had no conception either of the magnitude of the task, or the work involved; and it has only been completed within a very few days of the contributors sinking placidly and somewhat surreptitiously into the haven of Demobilization. Staff-Sergeant J. H. Thompson, M.S.M., it will readily be appreciated, has only by a long-suffering patience surmounted the task of typing the prolific and ever propagating sheets.

The excellent and most expert work of Lance-Corporal Bryden and Private Jameson in the matter of design, will be admitted to be beyond all praise—being carried out under such improvised conditions as the Field affords, and reaching a degree of perfection seldom encountered at home. Private Graham, too, who for so long ably presided over the Battalion Canteen must be thanked for coming in at the death with his timely assistance.

As the last flagrant act of insubordination and in defiance of all orders, we, to the contrary, will say that without the mass of detailed information placed at our disposal by the Commanding Officer, together with his handsome contribution of oil and water colour drawings, this extraordinary volume could never have been consummated. It has been something worth remembering to witness his pride and pleasure in living the Great Days of the past four years over again.

One must couple with him Major Andrew, D.S.O., M.C., the Second in Command, who so successfully and with such loving care, garnered the money necessary as a guarantee for the Book's success.

We do not believe that anything that could have been thought of for the comfort and pleasure of our Members, equally with every conceivable thing for the undoing of the Hun, was ever overlooked or forgotten. We may mention our Christmas Cards and Calendars, our Cards of appreciation of services in action, our stocks of footballs, boxing gloves, many sets of athletic clothing and printed Lists of Honours and Awards. All these things also largely contributed towards our unique all-round happiness and efficiency.

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B.E.F., FRANCE—MAY, 1919.

It is a man's greatest privilege to command, not only the conduct and operations of his Battalion, but its confidence and loyalty. In this I have been peculiarly privileged. I am only sorry that, owing to my youth, and that prior to this war I have held only humble positions, I was, perhaps, unable to bear this burden of responsibility. It has been a hard task, but always one of pleasure; for, at all times, as this volume has shown, have I been generously supported. No Commanding Officer could have been better supported than I have been, by his Second in Command, Adjutant, Company Commanders, Quartermaster and Transport Officer; his R.S.M., R.Q.M.S., and his Orderly Room Sergeant. But all, in their sphere, have shown the great qualities of the soldier—energy, cheerfulness and unselfishness. Knowing the generosity burning in the hearts of our men, I know also, that my failures and faults have been freely forgiven.

That which we have achieved as a Battalion and the Victory won, could not have been gained without the help of God. We know this.

I have a book containing the names and addresses of nearly every man who has served with our Units. Should at any time any man wish to get into communication with an old friend, if the letter is sent addressed to the friend, to me at my address, I will forward it. I shall always be only too happy to see, or to hear from, any of those whom I have been privileged to serve with in France, at any time.

My address is:—

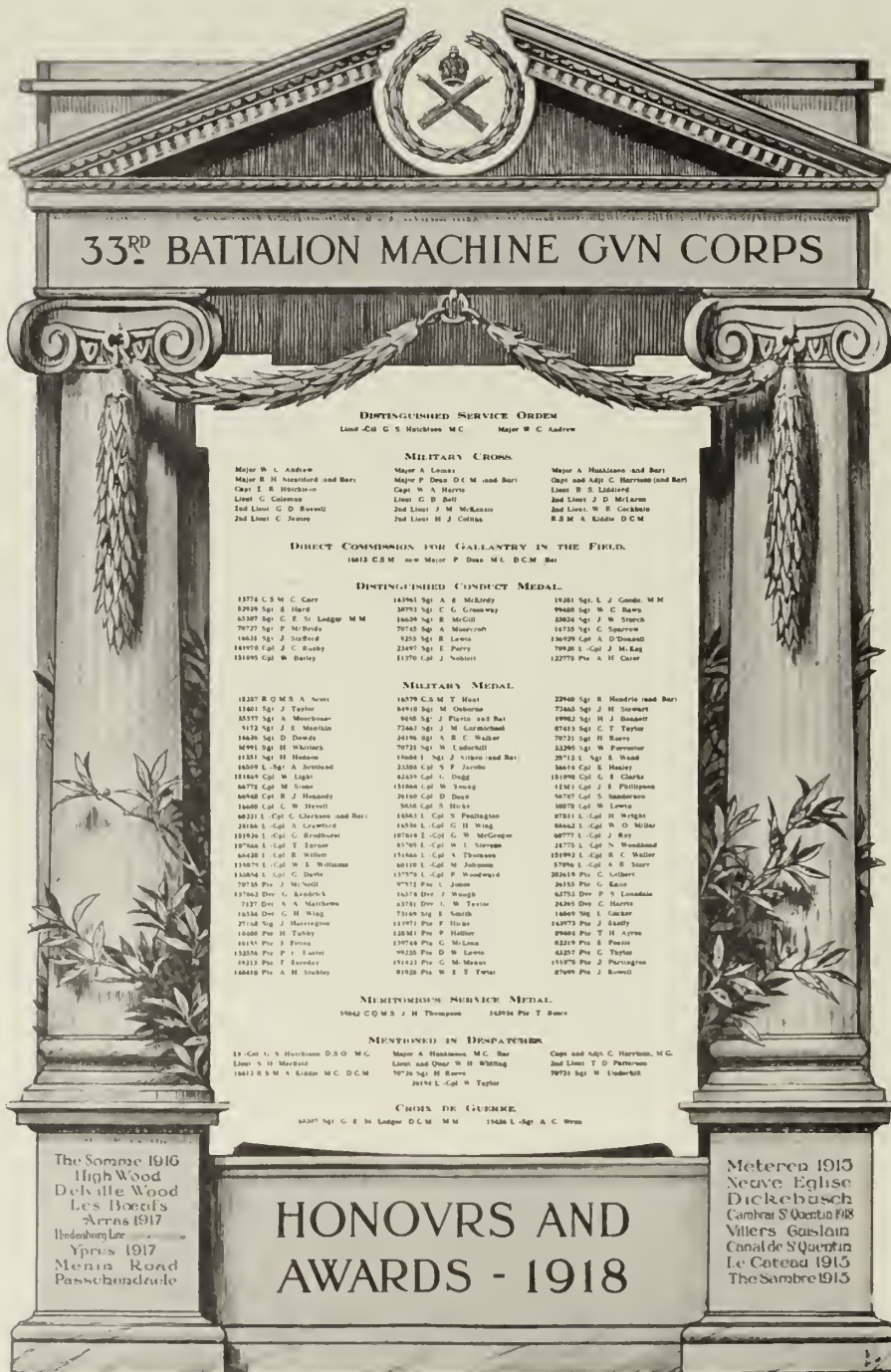
MADDOX FARM,  
BOOKHAM,  
SURREY.

I shall go back now to a humble position. My happiest days have been with this Battalion; my pride has been, and will remain, unbounded; and my greatest hope is that the friendships made will not be permitted to die.

The play is now over and the curtain rung down. Our Battalion and Machine Gun Companies no longer exist; yet it is neither a boast, nor yet a banal thing, to say that its tradition and example will remain for all time. We neither claim, nor wish, to have a wide publicity. Our Book has been written so that our men, and our mothers and widows, may tell to their children of how their own kin fought, bled and even died, that our country should be unsullied; and our women remain unbesmirched by the wolves of Europe; and that Britain fought for her word, her honour and her friends; so that they may know, also, at first hand, of where and how our lads fought, and suffered and won.







33<sup>RD</sup> BATTALION MACHINE GUN CORPS

**DISTINGUISHED SERVICE ORDER**  
 Lt Col G S Hutchins M.C. Major W C Andrew

**MILITARY CROSS**

Major W C Andrew	Major A Lewis	Major A Mackinnon and Bar
Major B H Mansfield and Bar	Major P Doss D.C.M. and Bar	Capt and Adj. C Harrison and Bar
Capt L B Hutchins	Capt W A Harvey	Lt Col B S Liddard
Lt Col C Coleman	Lt Col C B Bell	Adj. Lt Col J D McLaren
2nd Lt Col C D Rowell	2nd Lt Col J W Mackinnon	2nd Lt Col W R Corbridge
2nd Lt Col C Jones	2nd Lt Col H J Collins	R.S.M. A. Kiddle D.C.M.

**DIRECT COMMISSION FOR GALLANTRY IN THE FIELD**  
 1813 C.S.M. and Major P Doss M.C. D.C.M. Bar

**DISTINGUISHED CONDUCT MEDAL**

13774 C.S.M. C. Carr	14194 Sgt A B McKinley	19281 Sgt L J Goodie M.M.
82949 Sgt B Hard	38793 Sgt C G Greenway	99488 Sgt W C Baw
43397 Sgt C E S Ledger M.M.	14639 Sgt R McCall	22824 Sgt J W Storch
79727 Sgt F M Brude	79745 Sgt A Mosecroft	16735 Sgt C Spurren
14633 Sgt J S Bedford	9255 Sgt R Lewis	136729 Capt A D Donald
181976 Capt J C Ruddy	22897 Sgt E Perry	79828 Lt Col J M. Lee
131895 Capt W Bailey	11376 Capt J Nohant	122773 Pte A H Carter

**MILITARY MEDAL**

11237 R.Q.M.S. A. Scott	14979 C.S.M. T. Hunt	22940 Sgt B Hendrie and Bar
11401 Sgt J Taylor	48916 Sgt M Osborne	72465 Sgt J H Stewart
55377 Sgt A Moorhouse	9845 Sgt J Patten and Bar	89963 Sgt H J Bonant
5132 Sgt J E Maclean	72465 Sgt J W Carmichael	87413 Sgt C T Taylor
14636 Sgt D Dewald	24196 Sgt A R C Walker	79721 Sgt H Barre
56991 Sgt H Whitlock	79721 Sgt W Linderhall	32295 Sgt W Parnover
11151 Sgt H Hedden	14668 Lt Col J Wilson and Bar	29712 Sgt E Wood
14659 Lt Col A Dornand	23388 Lt Col V F Jacobs	36618 Capt R Healy
15184 Capt W Light	42339 Capt J Dugg	15199 Capt C E Clark
64772 Capt M Stone	51864 Lt Col W Young	11811 Capt J E Phillips
66948 Capt R J Handley	29140 Capt D Duff	56737 Capt S Sanderson
14688 Capt C W Harvey	56348 Capt S Hicks	36879 Capt W Lewis
60211 Lt Col G. Chavron and Bar	14643 Lt Col N Pennington	97811 Lt Col H Wright
24184 Lt Col A Crawford	14636 Lt Col G H Webb	86642 Lt Col W O Miller
131936 Lt Col G Broadbent	107816 Lt Col G W McGregor	60771 Lt Col J Kay
107446 Lt Col T Egan	95795 Lt Col W I. Storrans	24775 Lt Col N Woodhead
44420 Lt Col R Wilton	15164 Lt Col W Thompson	15199 Lt Col R C Walker
151874 Lt Col W E Williams	40118 Lt Col M Johnson	5796 Lt Col A R Starr
15384 Lt Col F. Durr	15749 Lt Col P Woodward	20419 Pte C Lister
79739 Pte J McNeil	97511 Pte J James	26150 Pte G. Egan
15762 Pte G. Anderson	16218 Pte J Waugh	62713 Pte P N. Lindsay
1127 Pte A A. Matthews	43181 Pte L. W. Taylor	24345 Pte C. Harris
14356 Pte G. H. King	73189 Pte S. Smith	14649 Pte L. Cocker
29148 Pte J. Harrington	11977 Pte F. H. Hill	14973 Pte J. Slaty
14686 Pte H. Taylor	12881 Pte R. Hutton	9964 Pte T. H. Ayres
14145 Pte J. Bence	139748 Pte G. McLean	82219 Pte B. Paine
13356 Pte P. J. East	96220 Pte D. M. Lewis	42257 Pte G. Taylor
15111 Pte F. Ewerley	15122 Pte C. M. Morgan	15178 Pte J. Partington
146418 Pte A. H. Shubley	91920 Pte W. E. T. T. T.	87909 Pte J. Rowell

**MENTIONED IN SERVICE MEDAL**  
 1964 C.Q.M.S. J. H. Thompson 14294 Pte T. Stone

**MENTIONED IN DESPatches**

Lt Col L. S. Hutchins D.S.O. M.C.	Major A. Hutchins M.C. Bar	Capt and Adj. C. Harrison, M.C.
Lt Col N. H. MacCall	Lt Col and Quar. M. W. Whiting	2nd Lt Col T. D. Patterson
18123 R.S.M. A. Kiddle M.C. D.C.M.	79721 Sgt W. Linderhall	79721 Sgt W. Linderhall
	24196 Lt Col W. Taylor	

**CHINA DECEMBER**

13397 Sgt C E S Ledger D.C.M. M.M. 19446 Lt Sgt A C. Wren

The Somme 1916  
 High Wood  
 Delville Wood  
 Les Boeufs  
 Arras 1917  
 Hindenburg Line  
 Ypres 1917  
 Menin Road  
 Passchendaele

**HONOURS AND AWARDS - 1918**

Meteren 1915  
 Neuve Eglise  
 Dickebusch  
 Cambrai S. Quentin FOR  
 Villers Gaslain  
 Canal de S. Quentin  
 Le Cateau 1915  
 The Somme 1915

HONOURS AND AWARDS, 1918.



*I highly appreciate your gallantry in action at \_\_\_\_\_ on \_\_\_\_\_*

COMMANDING 33<sup>RD</sup> BATT<sup>N</sup>  
 MACHINE GUN CORPS

CARD OF APPRECIATION OF SERVICES IN THE FIELD.

## HONOURS AND AWARDS

If also, in some dim, afterglow fashion, the strivings and the frolics, the horror and the fun of our past days is reflected for us, so that, in the comfort of our homes, as we turn the pages, we can again visualize the smoke of the battlefield, or the Mule Race at Alette; hear the purr and crackle of our guns at Meteren, or the triumphant strains of the Band echoing through the streets of ruined Baupaume; scent the dank rot and filth of the Somme trenches, or the yellow gas fumes of Passchendaele; feel the pulse quicken with the thought of Zero hour, or with the warm glow of the companionship of good friends, huddled under the same blanket, in the straw of an old granary; and know that we strove manfully and unselfishly as one man towards the common end, with high hope, pride, godliness and happiness; the utmost mission of these pages will have been accomplished.

*P. S. Hutchison M.C.  
Comd 33<sup>rd</sup> Bn A.G.C.*

### HONOURS AND AWARDS.

#### DISTINGUISHED SERVICE ORDER.

Lieut.-Colonel G. S. Hutchison, M.C. | Major W. C. Andrew, M.C.

#### MILITARY CROSS.

Lieut.-Colonel G. S. Hutchison.	Lieutenant G. B. Bell.
Major W. C. Andrew.	Lieutenant G. E. Coleman.
Major P. Dean, D.C.M. (and Bar).	Lieutenant R. Hales.
Major A. Huskisson (and Bar).	Lieutenant A. Liddell.
Major W. Lewthwaite	Lieutenant B. S. Liddiard.
Major A. Lomax.	Lieutenant C. L. Stokes.
Major R. Stentiford (and Bar).	Lieutenant C. R. Arnott.
Capt. and Adj. G. Harrison (and Bar).	2nd Lieutenant H. J. Collins.
Captain G. Falkner.	2nd Lieutenant W. B. Cockbain.
Captain W. Cross.	2nd Lieutenant C. L. Davy.
Captain L. R. Hutchison	2nd Lieutenant C. James.
Captain W. A. Harris.	2nd Lieutenant J. D. McLaren.
Captain P. A. McLoughlin.	2nd Lieutenant J. M. McKenzie.
Lieutenant F. S. J. Adams.	2nd Lieutenant G. D. Russell.
	R.S.M. A. Kiddie, D.C.M.

## HONOURS AND AWARDS

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### DIRECT COMMISSIONS FOR GALLANTRY IN THE FIELD.

Company Sergeant-Major (now Major) P. Dean, M.C., D.C.M. (and Bar).  
Sergeant (now Lieutenant) A. Barnes, D.C.M.

### DISTINGUISHED CONDUCT MEDAL.

R.S.M. A. Kiddie.	Sergeant H. Reeve, M.M.
C.S.M. C. Carr.	Sergeant J. Stafford.
C.S.M. P. Dean (and Bar).	Sergeant G. St. Ledger, M.M.
Sergeant A. Barnes.	Sergeant J. Sturch.
Sergeant W. Bawn.	Sergeant C. Sparrow.
Sergeant H. Bull.	Sergeant M. Toohey.
Sergeant L. Goode.	Corporal W. Bailey.
Sergeant C. Greenway.	Corporal T. Hinton.
Sergeant E. Hurd.	Corporal J. Noblett.
Sergeant A. Harris, M.M.	Corporal A. O'Donnell.
Sergeant R. Lewis.	Lance-Corporal W. Bradbury.
Sergeant A. McKirdy.	Lance-Corporal J. W. Diskin.
Sergeant P. McBride.	Lance-Corporal J. McKay.
Sergeant R. McGill.	Lance-Corporal H. Samuels.
Sergeant A. Moorcroft, M.M.	Private A. H. Cator.
Sergeant E. Perry.	

### MILITARY MEDAL.

R.Q.M.S. A. Scott.	Sergeant H. Hodson.
C.S.M. T. Hunt.	Sergeant J. Hinder.
C.S.M. W. Roberts.	Sergeant H. Hills.
C.Q.M.S. H. Riley.	Sergeant A. Harris.
Sergeant H. J. Bennett.	Sergeant R. Hendrie (and Bar).
Sergeant L. Bland.	Sergeant A. Keeble.
Sergeant Boast.	Sergeant D. McLellan.
Sergeant J. Clarke.	Sergeant A. Moorcroft.
Sergeant J. M. Carmichael.	Sergeant J. Maulkin.
Sergeant D. Dowds.	Sergeant A. Moorhouse.
Sergeant A. Delenty.	Sergeant (Bandmaster) P. Ogden.
Sergeant T. Donaldson.	Sergeant M. Osborne.
Sergeant J. Flavin (and Bar).	Sergeant D. Ralph.
Sergeant W. Forrester.	Sergeant G. Rose.
Sergeant L. Goode.	Sergeant H. Reeve.
Sergeant Gillespie.	Sergeant W. Smith (and Bar).

## HONOURS AND AWARDS

### MILITARY MEDAL—*continued.*

Sergeant G. St. Ledger.	Lance-Corporal G. McGregor.
Sergeant W. Scott.	Lance-Corporal S. Penlington.
Sergeant J. Stewart.	Lance-Corporal J. Roy.
Sergeant J. Taylor.	Lance-Corporal A. Storr.
Sergeant C. Taylor.	Lance-Corporal W. Stevens.
Sergeant W. Underhill.	Lance-Corporal H. Samuels.
Sergeant J. Whiting (and Bar).	Lance-Corporal T. Turner.
Sergeant H. Whitlock.	Lance-Corporal W. Taylor.
Sergeant A. Walker.	Lance-Corporal A. Thomson.
Lance-Sergeant J. Aitken (and Bar).	Lance-Corporal R. Willett.
Lance-Sergeant A. Scotland.	Lance-Corporal W. Williams.
Lance-Sergeant E. Wood.	Lance-Corporal G. Wing.
Corporal H. Bradley.	Lance-Corporal P. Woodward.
Corporal G. F. Clarke.	Lance-Corporal N. Woodhead.
Corporal G. Dagg.	Lance-Corporal T. Wilson.
Corporal D. Dean.	Lance-Corporal R. Waller.
Corporal E. Golding (and Bar).	Lance-Corporal H. Wright.
Corporal C. Hudson.	Private T. H. Ayres.
Corporal C. Havell.	Private T. C. L. Cooper.
Corporal R. Henedy.	Private P. Easter.
Corporal S. Hicks.	Private J. Fitton.
Corporal E. Healy.	Private T. Fereday.
Corporal S. Jacobs.	Private E. Foster.
Corporal W. Light.	Private C. Jones.
Corporal W. Lewin.	Private G. Gilbert.
Corporal McLaren.	Private P. Hellier.
Corporal M. McKechnie.	Private G. Kane.
Corporal J. Phillipson.	Private D. Lewis.
Corporal M. Stone.	Private G. McLean.
Corporal A. Sorbie.	Private A. McIntyre.
Corporal S. Saunderson.	Private J. McNeill.
Corporal W. Young.	Private R. Owden.
Lance-Corporal G. Brodhurst.	Private G. McManus.
Lance-Corporal C. Clarkson (and Bar).	Private J. Partington.
Lance-Corporal A. Crawford.	Private H. Rogers.
Lance-Corporal G. Davis.	Private A. Stublely.
Lance-Corporal M. Johnson.	Private J. Skelly.
Lance-Corporal W. Miller.	Private H. Tubby.
	Private W. Twist.

## HONOURS AND AWARDS

### MILITARY MEDAL—*continued.*

Private G. Taylor.	Driver J. Messenger.
Private J. Rowell.	Driver P. Lonsdale.
Signaller L. Cocker.	Driver A. Matthews.
Signaller J. Harrington.	Driver G. Kendrick.
Signaller E. Smith.	Driver H. Shaw.
Driver W. Clegg.	Driver G. Taylor.
Driver C. Harris.	Driver J. Waugh.
Driver F. Hicks.	Driver G. Wing.

### MERITORIOUS SERVICE MEDAL.

R.Q.M.S. A. Scott, M.M.	Sergeant E. Parkes.
C.Q.M.S. J. H. Thompson.	Private T. Reece.

### MENTIONED IN DESPATCHES.

Lieut.-Col. G. S. Hutchison, D.S.O., M.C. (Twice.)	R.S.M. A. Kiddie, M.C., D.C.M.
Major A. Huskisson, M.C. (and Bar).	C.S.M. C. Carr, D.C.M.
Major W. Lewthwaite, M.C.	Sergeant H. Reeve, D.C.M., M.M.
Major A. Lomax, M.C.	Sergeant W. Underhill, M.M.
Capt. and Adj. G. Harrison, M.C. (and Bar).	Sergeant J. Milne.
Captain H. V. Clarke.	Sergeant A. Moorcroft, D.C.M., M.M.
Lieut. and Q.M. W. H. Whiting.	Sergeant J. Maulkin, M.M.
Lieutenant S. H. Merfield.	Sergeant E. F. Leggett.
2nd Lieutenant T. D. Patterson.	Corporal L. G. Sexton.
	Lance-Corporal W. Taylor, M.M.

### CROIX DE GUERRE.

FRENCH.	BELGIAN.
Sergeant G. St. Ledger, D.C.M., M.M.	Sergeant E. Parkes.
Lance-Sergeant A. C. Wren.	Sergeant J. McParland.

### BELGIAN DECORATION MILITAIRE.

Sergeant W. Underhill, M.M.

